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SPEECHES

BY

LALMOHUN GHOSE.

PART II.

EDITED BY

ASUTOSH BANERJI.

Calcutta :

W. NEWMAN & Co. LTD., 8, DALHOUSIE SQUARE.

1884.

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PREFACE.

WHEN, in the course of the past year, I published an edition of the Speeches on public questions delivered by Mr. Lalmohun Ghose, both in England and India, I felt the great disadvantage under which the work was carried out, that it could not admit of the personal revision of the gifted gentleman whose public utterances, so full of patriotism, loyalty, and eloquence, were then for the first time presented to the public in a collected form. It had been my intention to bring out a continuation of the Speeches whenever they should have furnished sufficient matter of equal merit and size with the first volume.

That intention I have been forced very reluctantly to anticipate for two reasons. In the first place, it must be generally known that many Members of Parliament, and other English gentlemen of high position and large influence, have publicly, and with unmistakeable earnestness, signified their desire to favour and promote Mr. Lalmohun Ghose's candidature for election to represent an English constituency in the House of Commons. Such a movement cannot hope for more than the moral support it might receive from the English nation, and its success, therefore, must depend upon such substantial aid as all classes of the Indian people, from a wise regard for their own best interests, might be prepared to render.

It was thought that the publication of the present work, if it could not do much to help Mr. Lalmohun Ghose's candidature directly, would, at any rate, realise more vividly to his countrymen's minds his special qualifications to assert and vindicate their inherent rights in the only place where those rights can expect a fair hearing and a full consideration,—that is, the House of Commons. It was there that the battle for the liberties of England was really fought out and won—it was there that the intolerable institution of slavery received its death-blow—and it is there, it is to be hoped, that that justice which has so long and so arbitrarily been withheld will ultimately be conceded in full measure to India. With the marked determination of a large class of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy to persist in the repudiation of Native rights and in the repression of Native aspirations, our countrymen will be worse than blind to their own interests if they do not "take time by the fore-lock" and avail themselves to the freest and, fullest extent of the present tendency of public feeling in the most influential circles in England to ensure, as far as lies in their power, Mr. Lalmohun Ghose's return to Parliament.

The second reason for the hasty publication of this work is that the demand for the Speeches has been constant and pressing, and Mr. Lalmohun Ghose's absence in England on his fourth deputation has necessarily created and is maintaining a strong and growing interest in his public utterances as the selected champion of his country's cause there.

The present work has been undertaken, perhaps, prematurely, with a view to contribute, in however small a degree, towards the heavy expenses of his election, as well as to meet, however partially, the public demand ; and, accordingly, those speeches which have been delivered by Mr. Lalmohun Ghose since the date of the last publication have been embodied in this volume. The surplus proceeds from the sale of the present work will, therefore, be applied to assist Mr. Lalmohun Ghose in defraying the expenses of his election.

It is to be hoped, then, that all true friends of their country will co-operate in an object which is sure to be conducive to its lasting benefit. Mr. Lalmohun Ghose's past efforts for the advancement of his country's cause have been so great and so successful that his further services in the same direction, emphasised by the responsible position he may soon be called upon to fill, cannot fail to be attended with results of more marked and permanent value to the people of India. The Speeches contained in the present volume will be found to be characterised by the same patriotism and eloquence as his previous utterances, and though they are less numerous, they are of as much merit as the contents of the first volume. With these few remarks, I confidently commit this little volume to the public spirit of all classes of the Indian community, who can appreciate true patriotism and real eloquence.

ASUTOSH BANERJI.

CALCUTTA,

25th November 1884.

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LORD RIPON'S INDIAN POLICY.

A CROWDED meeting was held at Willis's Rooms, on August 1st, 1883, in support of Mr. Ilbert's Bill and the general policy of Lord Ripon. There were present several Members of Parliament : Mr. John Bright, M.P., presided. Mr. Bright, after dwelling on the aims and objects of the Ilbert Bill, referred to the Anglo-Indian agitation consequent upon it, and said : "I will not insist upon it that the Covenanted Civil Service are at the bottom of this commotion. Some say that the non-official Englishmen have done too much to promote it. Some say—and there is a great deal of reasonableness in the statement—that a great deal of the trouble has arisen from the conduct and agitation of the lawyers in Calcutta. There are one or two facts which go rather to support that. We know lawyers are very ingenious everywhere, in every country. Well, I am told that recently a Judge in Bengal—a native lawyer of eminence—had been appointed, during the absence of his brother Judge, Chief Justice of Bengal, and that this was a very unpleasant pill for the English lawyers there, some one of whom, I suppose, might have been expected to take that office. They fear that this is a precedent that may be followed. Then, beyond that, I am told that a native member of the Bar has recently been appointed Standing Counsel to the Government of India, and these two appointments, and the suspicion that more may follow, have disturbed the minds of the members of the Calcutta Bar, and built up all this jealousy." Mr. Bright concluded by saying : "I know it has been said on high authority, speaking of the Supreme Being, that even the wrath of man shall praise Him, and possibly it may ; but the results which may flow from the conquest of India and its government by this country may, in some degree, compensate for the crime and suffering which were committed and endured during the progress of that conquest. But I should say that one thing is perfectly certain—that India was not committed to our control to be held as a field for English ambition and English greed. Our fathers may have erred—in my opinion, they did greatly err—but their children will make some compensation to the countless millions now subject to their rule by a policy of generosity and justice—a policy which, in my opinion, India and

the world have a right to expect and to demand from a Christian people, as we profess to be. I believe that Lord Ripon desires to advance this policy, to maintain the principles laid down in the Act of 1883, a paragraph from which I read, and in the noble Proclamation of the Queen issued to the people of India in the year 1858. And I may add this belief, that this meeting will maintain the Governor-General of India in the arduous and conscientious performance of the duties of his high office. (Cheers.) I gather support and consolation from the answer which the Secretary of State for India made the other day to that deputation. He told them that the Government had not the slightest idea of even suggesting to Lord Ripon to withdraw the Bill. Our business here to-day is to support Lord Ripon in that policy—(renewed cheers)—and to give, by united voice, as I hope we shall do, our utmost support to the Government existing in this country, under whom, of course, Lord Ripon is acting in India. He is the great Governor-General appointed by the Queen. He knows what there is in that Proclamation of the Queen. I do not believe that Lord Ripon could (I hope there is no man that would) abandon the gracious and noble promises which the Queen in that Proclamation made to the population of India. Now I told you that Lord Kimberley had received a deputation—a formidable deputation. I shall now introduce to you a deputation—I will not say as formidable in any sense except that in which a man comes forward to tell the truth with his whole heart. I call upon Mr. Lalmohun ~~Ghose~~, who has been deputed by his countrymen in Calcutta to lay some of their thoughts before you on this important question."

MR. LALMOHUN GHOSE, who was received with cheers, said :—If I did not know from past experience how ready an English audience always is in the case of a stranger, especially if that stranger is pleading the cause of his country, to give him a favourable, fair, and intelligent hearing, I should despair of being listened to by an audience still under the spell of the voice that is yet ringing in our ears (cheers), but under the circumstances I feel certain that, however inadequate my powers of expression may be, you will bear with me patiently while I endeavour to explain to you as briefly as I can the views and sentiments which my countrymen have commissioned me to make known to you in

reference to the questions under discussion. The administration of Lord Ripon is looked upon with a very different feeling by the Natives of India on the one hand, and by the Anglo-Indian community on the other. This controversy has lasted in India upwards of six months, and it has been carried on with unparalleled bitterness. Invective of the most envenomed character has been freely used, and the vituperative resources of the English language have been well-nigh exhausted. In saying this I do not wish to imply that the fault has been altogether on one side, or that the party that I represent has been perfectly immaculate; but I do say without fear of contradiction that if they have said things which were better left unsaid, the provocation has come entirely from the other side. But it is one of the characteristics of the men who are agitating against Lord Ripon's policy that they consider themselves privileged to strike with impunity. The echo of the contest, as the Chairman has told you, has been heard in this country. It has been heard within the walls of the India Office. But in order that you may be able to form a calm judgment on the question submitted to your decision, it is important that you should bear in mind that the policy that has been pursued by the present Viceroy is no reckless innovation of a visionary enthusiast, that it is no part of a revolutionary programme, but that it is the legitimate outcome of the pledges which have been given from time to time to your Indian fellow-subjects by the Imperial Parliament and by your common Sovereign. As the

Chairman has already told you, it is exactly half a century since the principles on which India was to be governed were laid down in an Act of Parliament passed in 1833. By that Act it is declared that all the subjects of the Queen, whether British or Indian, or of mixed parentage, were to have equal laws, and live under the same laws. That Act did not pass without opposition. Then, as now, it was said that the greatness of this country was inalienably bound up with the maintenance of the special privileges of Englishmen who went to India to make their fortunes, and who looked upon the country and its population as having been created for their special benefit. Then, as now, they were told that any diminution of these privileges, or any recognition of the political rights of the Indian people, was fraught with the greatest danger to the stability of the Indian Empire. But, to the lasting honour of this country, those unwise counsels did not prevail in 1833. The Parliament of that day refused to believe that what was morally right could be politically wrong. And, as if the language of that Act was not sufficiently clear, the Court of Directors wrote a despatch in which, in the most explicit terms, they said that thenceforth there was to be no governing caste in India. No doubt, it was an unpleasant change to men who previously were so many irresponsible despots, to be told that thenceforth they must be shorn of all their privileges and be content to be only subjects of a great empire and governed by laws administered to all without distinction of colour or creed. But this change was hailed

by the Natives of India as the inauguration of a new state of things under which law and order are to be supreme, and liberty for all, and not license for a few, is to be the guiding principle of the Government. (Cheers.) The same principles were again affirmed by the Royal Proclamation of 1858, when Her Majesty gave fresh pledges to her Indian subjects, promised them impartial justice, equal laws, and a fair share of the administration of their own country. Perhaps you will allow me to read a memorandum written by the Queen in her own hand, addressed to Lord Derby, when drawing up that Proclamation. It is to the following effect:—"The Queen would be glad if Lord Derby would write it himself in his excellent language, bearing in mind that it is a female Sovereign who speaks to more than a hundred millions of Eastern people on assuming the direct government over them, and, after a bloody war, giving them pledges which her future reign is to redeem, and explaining the principles of her government. Such a document should breathe the feelings of generosity, benevolence, and religious toleration, and point out the privileges which the Indians will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown and the prosperity following in the train of civilization." The noble desire of the Queen was faithfully embodied by the Minister in the Proclamation of 1858, and Her Majesty's words went straight to the hearts of her Indian subjects, and did more than anything else to tranquillise their minds and to secure their loyalty after the terrible calamities

that immediately preceded it. But the actual fulfilment of these promises has been prevented by the strong and determined resistance of the Anglo-Indian community, and they are, for the most part, as yet unfulfilled. We have still in India one law for the European and another for the Native, and our Criminal Code is still full of invidious distinctions of race. Well, it is only one of these distinctions—and probably the very smallest of them all—that is intended to be remedied by the Ilbert Bill, about which so much fuss has been made. Of itself it is a small measure scarcely worth fighting about; but then it is a step in the right direction, and it is an unmistakeable indication of the desire of the Indian Government to carry out those principles of equity and justice that were promised so long ago. It is on this account that our opponents have determined to fight out the old battle over again; and the people of India, well aware of the important principle involved, have come to regard this Bill as a sort of test question. Up to 1872, Europeans were altogether exempt from the jurisdiction of the local Courts, but they might be tried in one or other of the Courts for the presidential towns, of which there were only three; and, considering the great extent of the country, in many instances, offences could only be punished by a Court which was hundreds, or it might be more than a thousand miles from the place where the offence was committed, which meant nothing more nor less than a positive denial of justice. In 1872, the local Courts were invested with a jurisdiction over Europeans, but it was

of an extremely limited character. For instance, a Magistrate can pass a sentence of two years' imprisonment on a Native for certain offences, but he is only empowered to imprison a European for three months. It is natural that the Natives should look forward to the time when these distinctions of race would be swept away. In 1872, when these limited powers over Europeans were granted, it was enacted that they should be exercised only by judicial officers who were themselves Europeans. It is this last distinction, which has only been in existence eleven years, that is intended to be removed by this Ilbert Bill. Even the law of 1872 was strongly opposed, and was only carried by a majority of two in the Legislative Council. All that the Bill proposed to do is to raise a few Native Magistrates of the higher grade to a footing of equality with their European brethren, and the number who would be immediately affected by the proposed change is at present not more than three or four, who have all been educated in this country, and have won their way into the Civil Service in open competition with English youths. Is it likely that these men wil' abuse trust that is intended to be reposed in them? It is impossible to discover any real foundation for the alarm that is pretended to be felt. Speaking of the Bill, Sir J. Phear, a Judge of the High Court, and the late Chief Justice of Ceylon, said :—"I have carefully read all the reported speeches on this subject; but whether it is due to my want of perception or not, I have utterly failed to see any justification for the excitement

that prevails. If there is no real objection to the Bill itself we are forced to go behind and seek for an explanation elsewhere for the agitation against the Bill. The fact is, the opposition is not so much to the Ilbert Bill as to the general character of Lord Ripon's policy. The scheme for local self-government, to which reference has been made by the Chairman, the proposal to extend the benefits of education to the masses, the appointment of Natives to offices which used to be uniformly conferred upon Europeans—all these measures taken together, indicating a desire to carry out the promises of the Queen and of Parliament, have endeared Lord Ripon to the Natives of India; but they have raised up against his administration a host of enemies among a section of his own countrymen in India, who, if they had the power, would tear up the Queen's Proclamation and burn the Act of 1833. (Cheers.) The late Viceroy, who has been described by the Marquis of Hartington as being everything which a Viceroy ought not to be, has constituted himself the champion of those discontented persons to whom I have been referring. They have been lying in wait for a suitable opportunity, when they might hope to enlist the passions and the prejudices of the Anglo-Indian community against Lord Ripon's government, and the opportunity presented itself when Mr. Ilbert's Bill was introduced in the Legislative Council towards the beginning of this year, although it is a remarkable fact that when the measure was first announced, it excited no opposition and no alarm what-

ever. The present attitude of the Anglo-Indian community was not assumed till after the discontented persons, to whom I have alluded, put their heads together ; and till after speeches had been made by Calcutta lawyers containing some of the most infamous attacks that have ever been made against the Natives of India. The question seems likely now to be discussed in this country, and the people of India are not apprehensive of the result. Lord Ripon is keeping in view the principles held by such men as Lord Canning and the late Lord Lawrence. When he was Secretary of State for India, writing to Lord Lawrence, he said : "I hope that you saw enough of me when we were together at the India Office to know that I feel a great interest in Indian questions and in the welfare of the population for whose good government and happiness we are responsible. And I can assure you that it is an immense satisfaction to me to know that the principles on which I should desire to see the administration of India conducted are those by which you, as Governor-General, are constantly guided." And yet, because Lord Ripon has steadily followed the footsteps of that great and enlightened statesman, he and his administration have been denounced in unmeasured language. This conduct of his opponents, if it is persisted in, may be productive of the most disastrous consequences, and is utterly in opposition to the sentiments of the wisest statesmen that ever governed India. Lord Lawrence, in a speech made by him at a farewell dinner given to him in Calcutta, said :—

"And now I avail myself of this opportunity to entreat my countrymen in India of all classes to do their utmost in cultivating friendly and cordial relations with the people among whom they dwell. The latter will well repay our sympathy and good-will. Without the aid of the people we could never have weathered the storm of 1857. However great, however heroic, the exertions of our own countrymen in evil days, they were over-matched in the struggle, and never could have maintained themselves against the overwhelming odds to which they were opposed had they not been zealously aided by the efforts of loyal Natives."

These words of wisdom have been utterly disregarded on the present occasion. The mischief that has been done is not yet irreparable. I doubt not that the present angry feeling will soon evaporate, and that Englishmen and the Natives of India will live together again on terms of friendship ; but whether that is to be the case or not depends on the degree of support which the just and enlightened administration of Lord Ripon will receive at the hands of his countrymen. I will only add this observation, that if you wish to make another Ireland in the East, where you will have to deal with the disaffection, not of eight, but of two hundred and fifty millions of people, then you have only to listen to those who are endeavouring to force their baleful counsel on Her Majesty's Government and the English nation. (Cheers.) I am happy to say that our cause finds powerful champions among some of the greatest of your countrymen, and none more eloquent or more truly noble-

hearted than you, Sir, who has been a beacon to England, to the civilization of the world, through nearly half a century of public life, and has done us the honour of presiding on this occasion. We have abundant faith in the justice of the English nation, and we cannot believe that they will now turn their back upon their principles, or will shrink from giving their hearty support to the Viceroy who, amid difficulties of no ordinary character, has endeavoured to give effect to the will of Parliament and to redeem the pledged word of the Queen.

(Mr. GHOSE was warmly cheered at the conclusion of his speech.)

LORD RIPON'S INDIAN POLICY REGARDED FROM A NATIONAL POINT OF VIEW.

THERE was a meeting in the Palace Hall at Exmouth to hear an address by Mr. Lalmohun Ghose on the subject of "Lord Ripon's Indian Policy regarded from a National point of view." J. P. Bryce, Esq., J. P. (Bystock), presided, and the attendance included Sir John Phear.

The Chairman said they had met to hear two gentlemen speak who were well acquainted with India. (Hear, hear.) There had been considerable feeling upon the subject of the meeting, which was illustrated by the remarks of a Conservative friend of his, who expressed (in the same breath he used for speaking of the affection of the Colonies to the Mother Country) great disapprobation of the Ilbert Bill, which proposes to give the Natives of India the same power as is given to British residents. (Hear, hear.)

Sir John Phear said, in rising to introduce his friend, Mr. Lalmohun Ghose, he should very briefly bring before the meeting the nature of the subject which they were at present interested in, and with regard to which it was the purpose of Mr. Lalmohun Ghose to give the view which the Natives of his country hold. Mr. Lalmohun Ghose was a very old friend of his. He had known him and his brother—both eminent members of the English Bar in the High Court of Calcutta—for many years, and no persons with whom he was acquainted in India had a better right to stand forward as exponents of the best Indian feeling upon this subject. (Hear, hear.) The matter really lay within a very small compass.

Sir John Phear having finished his speech and resumed his seat,—Mr. LALMOHUN GHOSE, who was received with applause, expressed the opinion that it was essential to the good government of India that opportunities should be given for making known to the English nation the feelings and opinions of the Indian people upon subjects upon which this country was called on from time to time to exercise

independent' judgment. Alluding to the meeting at Willis's Rooms last week, he referred with satisfaction to the powerful advocacy of Mr. John Bright, and to the reverence with which he was regarded in India, whose cause he had advocated throughout his long and distinguished public career. To Sir John Phear—than whom no one was better qualified to express an opinion—they were also deeply indebted for the readiness with which he had stood forward, and for the ability with which he had expressed himself upon this question. Although one particular measure had come to the front in the present agitation, yet the difference between the Natives of India and the Anglo-Indian community related to the general character of the whole of Lord Ripon's policy. The Anglo-Indian community hoped that, if they succeeded in defeating the Government on Mr. Ilbert's Bill, they would make the remainder of Lord Ripon's policy impossible. The purpose of the Bill was to remove the distinction at present existing between Native and European judicial officers of the higher grades. Until 1872, Europeans were entirely exempt from the jurisdiction of all local Courts in criminal matters. A European could only be placed on his trial before the Court in the Presidency town, and as this was often hundreds, and sometimes a thousand miles away from a locality in which there were Europeans residing, the inconvenience and expense of making complaint against them was so great that, practically, there

was an absolute denial of justice where an European was the offender. This became such a scandal that in 1872 it was determined that local Courts should have certain limited powers over Europeans, but provision was inserted in the Code that even such limited powers should be exercised only by such local Judges and Magistrates as were themselves Europeans. At that time, this disqualification of the Natives had no practical application, because then none of them had attained that rank in the service that would enable them to exercise this jurisdiction ; but now, some few of them had attained the qualified rank, but the provision in the Code of 1872 debarred them from exercising jurisdiction. This had already given rise to some administrative inconvenience, because the Government had been obliged to keep these few gentlemen in out-of-the-way stations, where no Europeans were residing. But, apart from the administrative inconvenience, there was the important question of whether such distinction, based entirely on consideration of race and having nothing to do with consideration of fitness, capacity, and integrity, was compatible with the declaration of the first Imperial Parliament in 1833 and the Royal Proclamation of 1858, both of which laid down in unequivocal terms that all classes of Her Majesty's subjects were in future to be on a footing of equality, were to live under the same laws equally administered, and were fairly and impartially to be admitted to offices for which they might be otherwise qualified. When the matter was brought under the notice of Lord Ripon, he came to the conclusion that the

provision of the Code was a perpetuation of race and class distinction in their most offensive form, and a violation of the declaration made by Parliament and the promise made by the Queen to her Indian subjects. Accordingly, two years ago, the present proposal was announced. It was significant that at the time it created no excitement in the minds of Europeans in India, but when the proposal was introduced in the Legislative Assembly, six months ago, a change had come over [redacted] spirit of Europeans in India. Why was this? Because by that time it was found that the intention of Lord Ripon's Government was to mete out even-handed justice between all classes. If there was one thing more than another disliked by advocates of monopolies and upholders of privilege, it was even-handed justice. The official classes of India deeply resented a scheme of local self-government propounded by Lord Ripon, which proposed to transfer from that Civil Service to local bodies the transaction of Municipal affairs, members of such bodies, however, to be under the control and supervision of the Central Government. This gave mortal offence to the Civil Servants of India. Then admirers of Lord Lytton—the Jingo of India—were displeased with Lord Ripon for freeing the Native Press from the shackles formed for them by the previous administration. Certain appointments of Lord Ripon proved that he was anxious to recognise the legitimate and just claims of the Natives of the country. The appointment of a Native Chief Justice of Bengal, and of another of Standing Counsel to the Government, gave

terrible offence to the Calcutta lawyers, who were to a large extent responsible for the present agitation. He was sorry to say this feeling did not stop with the Bar but had spread to the Bench. These various causes produced a certain amount of irritation among certain sections of the Anglo-Indian community against the administration of Lord Ripon, and when the Ilbert Bill was introduced, it was felt it presented a splendid opportunity for making an attempt to discredit the Indian Government by raising the cry of liberty and appealing to the passions and prejudices of the bulk of the Europeans in India, which was likely to be echoed in some parts of England. The result was an agitation of a most persistent and vehement kind had been set on foot in India. Some of the Anglo-Indian newspapers were indulging in language towards the Natives of the most objectionable character, and denouncing Lord Ripon in terms for which they could find no parallel since the days when Canning stood between the people of India and a bloody and indiscriminate vengeance. But whilst bitterly opposed by Anglo-Indians, the policy of Lord Ripon had been welcomed by the Natives as the indication of an honest desire and sincere determination to carry out the promises of the Queen and Parliament, and had called forth a degree of loyalty, gratitude, and personal attachment towards Lord Ripon which it had fallen to the lot of a few of his predecessors to evoke. The Anglo-Indian community would have liked to have themselves settled this matter, but menace had no effect upon Lord Ripon. The Government of India

were not to be bullied into submission, and the Anglo-Indians had been obliged, much against their will, to appeal to the public feeling of England. In this tribunal the Indian people had abundant faith, for they felt that the English nation would never allow themselves to perpetuate an injustice at the bidding of a small selfish clique. The measure now proposed was based on principles laid down by Parliament and affirmed by the Queen, and was not the revolutionary measure likely to sap the foundation of the British Empire that its opponents would suggest. Alluding to the persons whom it was proposed to appoint under this measure, he pointed out they would be men who had seen years of service and who had proved their fitness, ability, capacity, and integrity to the satisfaction of the Government. He condemned the misleading impression conveyed by the speech of Mr. E. Stanhope, the effect of the suggestion being that the Natives of India already enjoyed certain exemptions from criminal law. As a fact, these privileges only extended to the civil law, the Criminal Code of the country recognising no exemption of any Native of India. He needs say nothing of the judicial efficiency of his countrymen, Sir John Phear having already spoken on that point. The truth was, as Lord Lawrence had said, that the greatest difficulty in the administration of India was the opposition which any conscientious Governor met with from his fellow-countrymen in India whenever he wanted to carry out a just and liberal policy towards the Natives. He was happy, however, to say the pre-

sent question would be decided by the English people, and their Indian fellow-subjects were not afraid of what that decision would be. He did not believe that in 1883 they would be less generous than they were half a century ago. The policy of Lord Ripon was not a new invention—it was but the development of the principles of the Parliament of 1833, and an attempt to redeem the promises made by the Queen in 1858. Lord Ripon was but following in the footsteps of his distinguished predecessors, Canning and Lawrence. By his wise and generous policy he had earned the gratitude of the people of India. His policy was calculated not only to promote the welfare of the country, but it was the only policy consistent with the permanent stability of British rule in India. (Cheers.)

Mr. Green having addressed the meeting in an able speech, Mr. Gordon proposed, and Captain Luke seconded, a resolution expressing the high approval of the meeting of Lord Ripon's policy in India.

The resolution was carried by acclamation.

A vote of thanks was passed to Mr. LALMOHUN GHOSE, on the motion of Mr. Kennedy, and Mr. Ghose, in replying, said that although he had called attention to certain blemishes in regard to British administration in India, it must not be supposed that he did not recognise, and was grateful for, what the British Government had done for the people of India.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman was passed on the motion of Sir John Phear.

THE ILBERT BILL.

ON Tuesday, the 4th September 1883, a crowded and enthusiastic meeting was held at the Royal Public Rooms, Exeter, under the auspices of the Exeter Liberal Association, in support of Lord Ripon's Indian Policy and the Ilbert Bill. The *Western Times* says :—“The central figure of the evening ~~was~~ Mr. Lalmohun Ghose, a member of the Calcutta Bar, who has come over to England for the purpose of placing before the British public the feeling the Natives of India have in favour of Lord Ripon's policy. Last evening Mr. Ghose addressed the audience in a speech of near an hour's duration—a speech which put the whole case clearly and forcibly, and which was distinguished alike by its cogency and argument and by the manner in which it was delivered. At a very early stage he won the warm sympathy of the audience, and the frequent bursts of applause indicated how fully the listeners concurred with the speaker in his advocacy of justice. But, perhaps, the feature of the evening was the demonstration occasioned by a mere incident in the speech—the mention of Mr. Gladstone's name. The effect was almost electrical. The audience with one consent burst into enthusiastic cheering, then the people rose *en masse*, and it will be difficult for those who were not present to picture to themselves the enthusiasm which thrilled the crowded room. The cheering was for some time continuous, and the speaker was more than once obliged to give up the attempt to proceed. When Mr. Ghose mentioned that in India, no less than in England, Mr. Gladstone was recognised as the friend of the people, the cheering again burst forth. The scene indicated the affection which the Liberal party have for the Prime Minister and the unbounded confidence that he still enjoys. Sir John Phear, Hon'ble Bernard Coleridge, and Mr. Edward Johnson, M.P., followed in the order named, each receiving the heartiest welcome,—the warmest greeting, however, being reserved for the Senior Member of the City, whose appearance among his constituents is always a source of sincere pleasure. The meeting was unanimous from first to last, and Mr. Ghose will certainly go back to India with a very pleasant memory of the welcome given him in Exeter, and hearty sympathy shown with the millions of people whose cause he pleaded.” Mr. J. P. Bryce, J.P., the President of the Liberal Association, presided.

The Chairman, whose rising was received with applause, said they had met for the purpose of hearing an address by Mr. Lalmohun Ghose. (Applause.) He was a Barrister in the High Court of Bengal,

and after hearing him it would be allowed that he had the ability to express the feelings of the Native population of India—(hear, hear)—on the subject of what was known as the Ilbert Bill. It had long been a principle of the Liberal party that, in upholding our interests in countries over which we ruled, we should also consider the interests of the Native populations—(hear, hear)—and he was certain that the meeting would find good reason to do so in this case when it had heard Mr. Ghose, whom he would now call upon to address them. (Applause.)

MR. LALMOHUN GHOSE, received with cheers, said he had to thank the meeting on his own behalf and on behalf of his countrymen for giving him that opportunity of laying before them some of their views in regard to the policy of the present Viceroy of India, with special reference to what was generally known as the Ilbert Bill, which had formed the subject of very bitter controversy between the people of India, on the one hand, and the resident English population, on the other. The real issue between the parties—that which underlay the present discussion and gave it the importance which it would not otherwise possess—was the all-important question whether the policy laid down by the Act of Parliament passed in the year 1833, and re-affirmed by the Queen herself in the Royal Proclamation of 1858—a policy of equal justice towards all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in India—(cheers)—whether that policy was to continue to be the guiding principle of the Indian administration, or whether it was now to be reversed; whether the Indian Empire was to be henceforth maintained solely in the interests and for the benefit of a handful of Englishmen in the East. (Cheers.) That was the question, which was never put in that simple and naked form by their

opponents because they were well aware that such a question so put could get only one response from the people of this country ; and his countrymen, for their part, had also the fullest confidence in this country's sense of justice. (Cheers.) If any further evidence were needed on such a point, it would be furnished by meetings such as these, and by the hearty demonstrations of approval with which they received those references to the policy of 1833. (Cheers.) Their opponents would have very much trouble to be able to decide this question themselves, and without the slightest reference to the wishes of the English nation, but since that was impossible, they were now trying as much as lay in their power to darken the issues in the hope that the English people might be hoodwinked into pronouncing the judgment in their favour before they had rightly comprehended the real nature of the question which was submitted for their decision. (Applause.) Although, as he had said, the real question in dispute was the general character of Lord Ripon's policy, yet the opposition was ostensibly directed to the legislative measure known as the Ilbert Bill. (Applause.) That Bill was a small measure in itself, and but for the important principles involved, it would be impossible to account for the vehement opposition which it had excited. (Hear, hear.) Judging from the violence of that opposition, they would imagine it possible that nine-tenths of the Anglo-Indian gentlemen in India spend their time in the Police Courts. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) They were paying a very bad

compliment to themselves, and had so far forgotten themselves as to pay a very grossly bad compliment to their ladies, because they were very fond of saying that delicately-nurtured English girls were to be brought up before Police Magistrates. (Laughter and cheers.) For himself he could not understand why ladies should be brought up before a Police Magistrate at all. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) But before he made any other comments upon this matter, they would, perhaps, allow him to explain to them very briefly the general scope and history of the Ilbert Bill, so that they might be able to judge for themselves whether it was a revolutionary measure such as it was represented to be by their opponents ; or whether it was not rather, as they regarded it, but a small instalment of the justice that was promised to their fellow-subjects by a Liberal Parliament and our common Sovereign. (Applause.) This MR. GHOSE very lucidly did, and proceeded to say that attempts had been made from time to time by successive Indian administrations to carry out practically the policy of 1833 ; but they had invariably provoked the bitter opposition and uncompromising hostility of the resident English population in India. Even a statesman like Lord Lawrence—one of the greatest of Indian Viceroys—had to complain of the conduct of his countrymen in India in the strongest possible language. The result was that—notwithstanding the declaration of Parliament notwithstanding the express directions of the late Court of Directors, and notwithstanding the reiteration of those promises by Her Majesty in the Proclamation of

1858—they would be surprised to hear that the European population in India, until eleven years ago, continued to be entirely exempt from the administration of justice in the local Courts. In 1872, a European subject could only be tried in one of the Courts of a Presidency Town ; and MR. GHOSE graphically pictured to his audience what such a state of the law meant ; it was as if a man, for an offence committed in Exeter, would have to be tried at Berlin or St. Petersburg. The consequence was that almost all the crimes committed by Englishmen in India went entirely unpunished. To tell the ignorant and the poor Hindu ryot in the interior of the country—living, perhaps, 1,000 miles from the Presidency Town—that if he wanted redress for any wrong committed by an Englishman on himself he must go with all his witnesses to Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay—as the case might be—was to tell him, in other words, to bear it and be content—that there was no justice to be had against an Englishman—that an Englishman was a superior being whom the laws of the land could not touch. (Cheers.) That was the state of the law, which was pronounced by every judicial and administrative authority in India to be a gross mockery of justice. (Cheers.) In 1872, a measure was introduced for the purpose of conferring upon the local Courts of the interior of the country some small and limited jurisdiction over Englishmen residing in India. But the jurisdiction which was then conferred was extremely limited. For instance, a Sessions Judge who was empowered to pass sentence of death upon a Native of India was only empowered to send a European

to prison for twelve months. (Shame.) No doubt it was a shame that distinctions of that kind should be suffered to exist in the Criminal Code of a country. (Cheers.) But, as if they had not already enough of those shameful and offensive distinctions, a fresh distinction was introduced in 1872—a distinction hitherto unknown. Up to that year all judicial officers in the service of the country were on a perfect footing of equality. Every Judge and every Magistrate exercised, as a matter of course, all the powers belonging to his office without the slightest reference to his own race or nationality. (Applause.) But in 1872, by that Code to which he was referring, it was enacted that the small powers which were then for the first time conferred upon the local Courts, were to be exercised only by such officers as were themselves Europeans. It was only that new disqualification—imposed for the first time eleven years ago, and which, therefore, could not be defended even on the doubtful plea of antiquity—(hear, hear)—it was that disqualification alone which was sought to be removed and altered by the Ilbert Bill. (Cheers.) That Bill left all the other laws which were in favour of Europeans entirely untouched. (Hear, hear.) In all serious cases the Europeans would still have to be tried by one or other of the High Courts. The powers of the local Courts would continue to be as limited and as circumscribed as ever. Englishmen, unlike Natives, would continue to have the right of appeal to a higher Court, and would also have a right to claim to be tried by a mixed Jury, one-half of whom, or more, must be either

Englishmen or Americans. The Ilbert Bill only proposed to restore Native judicial officers of the higher rank to a footing of equality with their English colleagues, and it only laid down that certain Judges and Magistrates of local Courts who had been deemed by the Local Government fit to be appointed to certain higher offices—that they should not be debarred from exercising any portion of the jurisdiction ordinarily attaching to those offices. (Cheers.) At the time that the disqualification he had referred to was introduced in 1872, it led to no practical mischief or inconvenience, because at that time no Native Judges or Magistrates had attained the rank in the Covenanted Service which would, but for that race disqualification, have entitled them to the position which the Ilbert Bill proposed to give them. But matters had changed since then. Now some of his countrymen who had won their way into the Covenanted Civil Service in open competition with Englishmen—(cheers)—some of those gentlemen had risen to the higher grades of the Service, and difficulties had already begun to be felt in regard to their position. The question was whether those gentlemen of whom he had spoken, who had given uniform satisfaction both to the Government and to the public, and who had shown themselves in every way deserving of promotion—whether those men were to be ever kept in out-of-the-way, undesirable, and unhealthy places, because in the more coveted and desirable stations there was a resident European population, and European prisoners might have to

be brought before them, with whom—by the disqualifying law of 1872—they would be unable to deal? That was the question which Lord Ripon had to face. Mr. Rivers Thompson—a gentleman who had been more or less opposed to every liberal measure of the Viceroy—had stated that the number of those Native members of the Service was so limited that the Government should have no difficulty in finding a sufficient number of out-of-the-way places where those gentlemen might be placed. (Shame.) It might be a matter of indifference to Mr. Rivers Thompson, installed in his palatial residence in Calcutta; but he asked them whether it was not a most serious hardship to the officers concerned—whether it was not a breach of the equality which such Native gentlemen had a right to expect under the covenants of their Service and the Proclamation of 1858—whether it was not one of those things of which not only those gentlemen themselves, but all their countrymen behind them, had a right to complain and feel indignant? (Cheers.) It was said by another class of critics that this was not a proper time to legislate upon this subject—that Lord Ripon should have waited until the number of Native Magistrates had increased to such an extent as to give rise to an imperative demand for the removal of this distinction. Which, he asked, was the wiser or the more statesman-like course to pursue? Was it not better—did it not indicate more prudent foresight to know the season when to take occasion by the hand and to deal with difficulties as they first began to make themselves felt,

than to fold arms and look on helplessly until the difficulties had increased and accumulated—until their hands were forced, and they were driven to legislate under a howling clamour and an overwhelming demand for reform? (Loud cheers.) Such a policy would be dangerous in any country, but the danger would be something enormous in a country like India. There had always been a certain class of persons who, when they found themselves unable to deny the abstract justice of any measure of reform, fell back upon the assertion that it was inopportune. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) If they were to wait until those sapient gentlemen had pronounced the fitting period had arrived, then they would never have any reforms at all. (Cheers.) What were the other objections to this Bill? He would not dwell upon the ability, the capacity, or the integrity of Native judicial officers, because that was a subject upon which their friend, Sir John Phear, would be able to speak with a weight and authority which few besides could possibly lay claim to. He had already told them of the gentlemen who were to be immediately affected by the passing of the Ilbert Bill: there were a few others who would be thereby affected, and to whom he would refer presently. But the gentlemen who would be immediately affected by this Bill were those who had entered the Service by competition in England. They had already had long judicial experience in India. They were brought up and trained in English schools and colleges; they had the advantage of several years'

residence in this country ; and they had gone back with a thousand pleasant associations of England and English people. (Cheers). He asked, were those men likely to prove false to all their antecedents and to betray the trust that was now proposed to be given them ? (No, no.) Was it fair or just to assume that such men would be swayed by race prejudice when called upon to administer justice between man and man ? (No, no.) But, apart from these considerations, what did past experience teach us ? Some of those gentlemen had already exercised jurisdiction over Europeans as Magistrates in the larger Presidency Towns, where no distinction was recognised between Native and European Magistrates ; and it was an undisputed fact that those Native gentlemen who had acted as Presidency Magistrates, and who had had to deal with European criminals, had performed their official duties to the completest satisfaction both of the Government and of the people of India. (Cheers). Their perfect integrity and thorough impartiality had never been questioned or suspected for a moment. (Cheers). Then he asked if it was not preposterous to suppose that those same gentlemen, when appointed to higher offices in the interior of the country, would suddenly change their characters and develop a variety of faults which had been hitherto conspicuous by their absence ? (No, no, and cheers.) Then it was said by some of their opponents that there were in India false cases because of a good deal of false evidence ; that, therefore, it was undesirable to invest Native Judges with jurisdiction over

Europeans. (Laughter.) He was not aware after all that there was much more perjury in India than in this country. (Cheers and laughter.) All had heard and read something about the great Tichborne case, for instance. (Laughter.) It was not for him to say on which side the rights and wrongs of that case might lie, but no one could possibly deny that perjury of the most astounding character was committed. (Hear, hear.) He would not go into that question. But even admitting for argument's sake, that they were worse off in India in that respect than we were in this country—how did that help the Opposition? (Cheers.) They did not question the impartiality of Native Magistrates; then how could they, with any consistency or reason, argue that because there was a good deal of perjury in India, therefore it was indispensable that every case should be tried by foreign Judges, who must of necessity be less acquainted with the people and their ways—(cheers)—and who must be very imperfectly acquainted with the language of the country? (Cheers.) Was it arguing like rational men to suppose that Native Judges and Magistrates who were born in the country, and who had sprung from the people—that those men would not be able to weigh the evidence of their own countrymen or to discriminate between truth and falsehood as well as their English colleagues? (Cheers.) The more they examined the arguments urged against this Ilbert Bill the more they would be convinced of their utter worthlessness. (Cheers.) But, nevertheless, they found that the High Court of Calcutta—which, he was very sorry

to say, had much degenerated since the days of Sir John Phear—departing from all its traditions of political neutrality, had recently issued a political manifesto in the shape of a Minute protesting against this Ilbert Bill. He would leave it to Sir John Phear to deal with that Minute in detail, but he should like to say a few words on it. He might mention, first of all, that, as against the prejudice of the Calcutta Court, the Ilbert Bill had more or less the support of three High Courts in India—of Madras, Bombay, and Allahabad. (Hear, hear.) The Calcutta Court had drawn a distinction between those Native members of the Civil Service who had entered that Service by competition in England, and those who had been appointed by nomination in India. Now, as regarded the competitive members of the Service, their opponents were unable to urge one word against their fitness. They only contented themselves with saying that the number of those men was so limited that it was not worthwhile to legislate on their behalf. They also described them with ill-disguised satisfaction as a small and dwindling class ; and, judging from the sentiments which found expression in that Minute, it was certainly not the fault of the Calcutta High Court that the Civil Service was still open to the Natives of India. But the opposition of the Judges was mainly directed against the conferring of that power upon those members of the Service who had been appointed by nomination in India. What they said was this—Those men did not undergo any public test, and there was no knowing how that class of offi-

ials might turn out. He entirely agreed with the Judges of the High Court, for he could say for himself and the majority of his countrymen that they were strongly opposed to that system of nomination when it was first introduced in 1879 by Lord Lytton, and they protested against it with all their might, for they wanted a fair field and no favour—(cheers)—they wanted to enter the Service by the open-door of competition and not by the back-door of nomination. (Cheers.) But how did this question arise at the present moment? Those men might or might not turn out to be worthy of the confidence of the Government. If they did not turn out to be worthy and fit, then they would not have the jurisdiction under the Ilbert Bill, for it was not intended by the Ilbert Bill to confer the jurisdiction upon any one, whether he was a competitive or nominated member of the Service, until after the Local Government had watched his works for years, and was satisfied that he was a man of sufficient ability, integrity, and capacity to be entrusted with those powers. (Cheers.) Their Lordships forgot or slurred over—for he could not understand men of their training and education forgetting anything like this—they purposely slurred over the fact that the Ilbert Bill is not a compulsory thing, but merely an enabling law. It simply empowered the Local Government in certain cases where they were perfectly satisfied of the fitness of an officer to invest him with that jurisdiction which, under the existing law, would, under no circumstances, be conferred upon him. (Loud cheers.) There was only one other

point in the Minute of this High Court to which he would refer. The Judges said it was a natural feeling for people to wish to be tried by their own countrymen, but it was a most dangerous lesson to teach in India. (Hear, hear.) He would like to ask their Lordships what they would think if a population of 250,000,000 said it agreed with the Judges, that it also shared that natural feeling, and demanded that the Government and Legislature should respect that feeling in its case just as in that of a European nation. (Applause.) What would then become of European Magistrates and the Judges throughout India, who were enjoying such large salaries, and who, for every one European case brought before them, had to deal with ten thousand Native cases? Most of them would find their occupation entirely gone if the principle insisted upon by the Judges of the High Court was to be rigidly enforced. Looking at the question from what point of view they might, it was impossible to come to any other conclusion than that after all there was no valid objection to this Bill, but that it was opposed by those who saw in it as clearly as the Natives an unmistakeable indication on the part of the Government to carry out the mandate of Parliament, and fulfil the promises of the Queen. (Applause.) The more the question was considered, the deeper would be the conviction that the opposition was not so much to the Bill as it was to the policy of England in the matter of the treatment of Indian subjects. The Anglo-Indian opposition had chosen for its champion in the House of Lords, Lord

Lytton, who during his tenure of office, did as much as possibly could be done to weaken and undermine the foundations of the Indian Empire by coercive legislation, by grinding taxation, and by needless and aggressive wars across the Frontier. Then, again, a deputation which waited on the Earl of Kimberley was fitly led by Sir A. Arbuthnot, who was unknown to fame even in India, where fame was sometimes so cheaply earned, until he achieved the unenviable distinction of being the member in charge of the Vernacular Press Act. In addition to these two leaders, the opponents of the Bill had also found a fitting champion in the House of Commons in the person of Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett. (Laughter.) He (Mr. Ghose) took particular pains to hear that gentleman on Wednesday last, when the speech, which had been so long coming out, was at length made public. On that occasion Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett did him the honour to turn his eye-glass upon him—(laughter)—and refer to him in terms of no overwhelmingly flattering character, but he (Mr. Ghose) trusted that he as well as his countrymen would survive those invectives. (Applause.) The Natives of India deeply regretted the action of the Anglo-Indian community, but they were not surprised at it, for it was impossible to expect men who profited by a monopoly and enjoyed certain special immunities to be eager for reforms or to submit very cheerfully to any curtailment of their privileges. Only the other day the Prime Minister—(loud cheers)—they would probably be pleased to hear that it was hardly possible even for them to honour Mr. Gladstone

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more than the Indian people did—(renewed cheers)—the Prime Minister declared in eloquent language that in the British Colonies, in every instance, the resident European population had been bitterly opposed to any extension of the freedom and extension of the enfranchisement of the weaker race. (Shame.) What happened in the Colonies had now happened in India, and if the voice of those who wished to perpetuate a policy of crime and blood in India was listened to, he would be a bold prophet who could say what would occur in the future, and how long peace and concord would reign. The Natives of India were not afraid, and could not believe that in the 19th century, that with all its progress and enlightenment, the present generation would be found to be less wise, less just, or less generous than their forefathers in 1833. They could not believe that England would consent to reverse the noble policy of half-a-century ago, or tear up the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 in order to gratify the unworthy instincts of those who, if they had their way, would drag the name of England through the mire, and bring on the Indian Empire some terrible catastrophe. He hoped that the meeting would give all the support it could to the Viceroy who was endeavouring to carry out the mandate of Parliament and the English nation, who had done more than most of his predecessors to rivet the bonds of union between England and India, and whose name was enshrined within the hearts of their fellow Indian subjects.

LORD RIPON'S INDIAN POLICY, GIVING GREATER FREEDOM TO HER MAJESTY'S INDIAN SUBJECTS.

A LARGE public meeting was held on the 16th November 1883, in St. Andrew's Hall, Norwich, under the auspices of the Norwich Junior Liberal Association, in support of Lord Ripon's policy for giving greater freedom to Her Majesty's Indian subjects. Mr. Lalmohun Ghose responded to the invitation of the Committee to be present and give an address on the subject. There was a large attendance of the leading and most active Members of the Liberal party. The chair was taken by Mr. J. J. Colman, M.P. The Chairman introduced Mr. Ghose, the speaker of the evening, amidst loud applause.

MR. LALMOHUN GHOSE, who was cordially received, commenced his address by referring with regret to the fact that the original arrangements for this gathering could not be carried out in consequence of his indisposition. He thought it was almost impossible to exaggerate the importance or the value of a meeting like this, for when he looked around him and saw how well this large hall was filled, he gathered consolation and hope ; and he was sure when his countrymen read or heard of this meeting, they would in an equal degree gather comfort and hope from the evidences which this magnificent audience afforded, of the desire of the English people to acquaint themselves with the true state of affairs in India, and, what was of greater importance, of their desire to do justice to the countless millions of Indian subjects. (Cheers.) He had spoken of consolation and hope, and he could assure them that both were urgently needed at the present moment in India, for within the last twelve months the resident English population

in that country, led and instigated by a small, selfish and clamorous clique, had set on foot an agitation against the responsible Government of India and a crusade against the political rights of the Indian people, which for violence, for unreason, for folly, had scarcely a parallel in the history of British India. These men had roused feelings of hostility and had stirred up anti-pathies of race which a long succession of wise and far-sighted statesmen in India had laboured to allay and extinguish. They had re-opened many an old sore, and by their arrogant demeanour and insolent speech had inflicted many a new wound, which, but for the implicit confidence which the Indian people had reposed in the justice of the English nation and in the wisdom and firmness of their present Viceroy—(hear, hear)—might have led to dangerous and disastrous results.

- But he rejoiced to think that the ultimate decision of this controversy did not rest with the noisy Anglo-Indian opposition in Calcutta, nor yet with that latest apostle of despotism and brute force, Mr. Justice Stephen, who, not content with his achievements in India, had once more couched his lance in defence of the system of tyranny and oppression with which his name was indissolubly associated in India. He also rejoiced to think that they were not as yet within a measurable distance of the time when Mr. Ashmead Bartlett would be Prime Minister of England. (Laughter.) They knew that the decision depended in the first place with the responsible Government of the country, and in the last resort with the English nation, and they felt

persuaded that the case had only to be fairly and intelligibly stated, and with fairness and moderation, in order at once to evoke an overwhelming consensus of opinion in this country in favour of the policy pursued by Lord Ripon—(applause)—which is after all a continuation and the development of the principles laid down by Parliament itself half-a-century ago, and affirmed by the Queen in Her Gracious Proclamation of 1858. So long ago as the year 1833 the Imperial Legislature, after full debate, decided upon the policy which wisdom and justice alike rendered it incumbent to pursue in India, and the principles then adopted were embodied in an Act of Parliament from which he would read an extract or two. Section 87 of this Act ran as follows:—“And be it enacted that no Native of the said territories—that is, of India—nor any natural-born subject of Her Majesty resident therein, shall by reason only of his religion, race, birth, descent, color, or any of them, be disabled from filling any place, office, or employment under the said Company.” There was also another section of this Act to which he would like to draw their attention, because it had a direct bearing upon the controversy in connection with the measure popularly known as the Ilbert Bill, but before reading the words of the section itself, he thought he ought to explain that up to the year 1833, Englishmen were not allowed to go out to India, or to settle there without having obtained the express permission and license of the East India Company. It must be said on behalf of the old Company, whatever their sins might have been,

they were at any rate determined not to allow any adventurers or interlopers to oppress the Native of the country. The result was that, although at that time Englishmen in India were not subject to the ordinary Courts of Justice, their number was so limited, and they were so directly under the control of the Company, that little or no practical mischief resulted from the inability of the Courts to deal with them. But in 1883 Parliament, in its wisdom, decided upon removing those restrictions which had hitherto existed ; but it was at the same time felt to be absolutely necessary to empower the Indian Legislature to render the English settlers in India amenable to the laws and subject to the jurisdiction of the legal tribunals of the country. During the debate which preceded this Act of 1883, a number of powerful speeches were delivered, and one of the most memorable and eloquent was a speech of Lord Macaulay, who, foreseeing almost like a prophet what has happened, said—" The license of the Government will now no longer be necessary to persons who desire to reside in the settled province of India. The power of arbitrary deportation is withdrawn. Unless, therefore, we mean to leave the Natives exposed to the tyranny and insolence of every profligate adventurer who may visit the East, we must place the Europeans under the same power which legislates for the Hindu. (Hear, hear.) No man loves political freedom more than I ; but a privilege enjoyed by a few individuals, in the midst of a vast population who do not enjoy it, ought not to be called freedom. (Hear, hear.) It is tyranny ! "

These views commended themselves to the approval of the Parliament of 1883, and they were embodied in section 85 of the Act to which he had referred, which section ran as follows :—“Whereas the removal of restrictions and the increase of Europeans in the said territories will render it necessary to provide against any mischiefs or dangers that may arise therefrom : be it, therefore, enacted that the Governor-General in Council shall and he is hereby required by laws and regulations to provide with possible convenient speed for the protection of the Native from insult or outrage.” Now those words were clear and explicit enough ; but in order to make assurance doubly sure, the Court of Directors explained and emphasised the intention of Parliament in a despatch which they wrote shortly afterwards. They said—“We are decidedly of opinion that all British subjects throughout India should forthwith be subjected to the same tribunal with the Natives.” It was, of course, implied in this proposition that in the interior they should be subjected to Mofussil Courts—that meant Courts in the interior of the country. “In our view,” the Court added, “you cannot possibly fulfil the obligation of protecting the Natives of India from insult and outrage according to the directions in Clause 85 of the Act, unless you render both Natives and Europeans responsible to the same judicial control. There can be no equality and protection where justice is not equal and on equal terms accessible to all.” (Hear hear.) Nor was that all, for a quarter-of-a-century later, when peace and order had been

restored, after the dark days of the Mutiny, the same noble principles of justice and equality in the eye of the law were proclaimed by the Queen to her Indian subjects, and her Royal word was solemnly pledged to the faithful execution and fulfilment of those promises. In the Proclamation of 1858, Her Majesty said :—" It is our further will that so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to all offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, integrity, and ability, duly to discharge." (Applause.) After some further clauses, Her Majesty's Proclamation concluded as follows :—" We hold ourselves bound to the Natives of our Indian territory by the same obligation of duties which bind us to our other subjects, and these obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil." (Applause.) In the year 1858 he was almost a child, but he could remember the lasting impression this Proclamation produced in India. It had been regarded by his countrymen ever since as the greater Charter of their political rights. It was the key-stone around which all their hopes and aspirations had clustered, and it was the foundation upon which their loyalty to the British Crown was based. (Cheers.) In proportion as the principles embodied in that Proclamation were confirmed, ratified, and carried out, England would augment the contentment and happiness of the Indian people, and increase their attachment to the English nation. (Hear, hear.) On the other hand, if there was

a desire shown to retire from that Proclamation, or to quibble away its purport--as Sir J. Stephens had attempted to do in the columns of the *Times*--if any disposition was shown to nullify that Gracious Proclamation of 1858, a blow would be struck at the root of loyalty and peace in India. These were the pledges upon which the people of India took their stand, and these were the promises which Lord Ripon was loyally endeavouring to fulfil. (Cheers.) He felt sure those who were wholly uninfluenced by the selfish and sordid motives which had actuated the opposition in Calcutta, would be in no way surprised that Lord Ripon was trying to carry out the wishes of the Sovereign he represented; but they would be rather disposed to wonder how it was that these promises had been so long unfulfilled, and that those who were charged to execute the behests of the English nation had suffered fifty years to go by whilst these national pledges remained unredeemed. But in fairness to the many eminent men who had held the reins of Government in India, he must say that theirs had been no light task, and on every occasion when they had attempted to introduce the smallest measure of justice towards the Natives, they were met with strong and envenomed opposition on the part of the English resident population. The late Lord Lawrence, than whom a wiser Governor was never sent out--(cheers)--writing in a private letter to Sir Erskine Perry, said, in speaking of his countrymen in India, that everybody was in favour of justice in the abstract, but when it came to putting

it into practice, there was a tremendous howl set up by the Anglo-Indians. These words would lead the English people to conceive that such action as that went a great way to paralyse the Executive in India. It was an undeniable fact that, in spite of the Act of 1833, Englishmen residing in India continued up to the year 1872 to be entirely exempt from the jurisdiction of the local Courts of the country, and they were only liable to be tried by one or the other of the three Supreme Courts in the three presidency towns of India. It was difficult for the people of England to realise for themselves the full effect of such a law, even with the help of one of those large maps which some years ago was recommended by Lord Salisbury. (A laugh.) What would Englishmen think if they were told that in the case of an assault, or any other criminal offence committed in Norwich, one could have no redress unless one went before a Magistrate sitting at such a distance as Vienna or Naples. (Shame.)

It was hardly possible for an Englishman to conceive of the existence of such an atrocious law. Yet, if a poor Indian peasant in one of the outlying tea plantations in the province of Assam were to be mal-treated or half-killed by an Englishman, that Native was told that he must go for justice, if he wanted it, to Calcutta—a distance of more than a thousand miles. (Cries of "Shame!") This city was to be reached by travelling through a part of the country where railways were unknown, and where the journey would occupy several weeks. Under such circumstances, few Natives ever



cared to try the experiment ; but if any one was adventurous enough to go on such a fool's errand, what happened ? A farce of a trial at Calcutta before an unsympathetic Jury, who would doubtless promptly return a verdict of not guilty, accompanied, perhaps, with a recommendation to the presiding Judge to commit the prosecutor for perjury. (Shame.) That was a cruel and scandalous mockery of justice. (Loud cheers.) Lest any one should think he was exaggerating or drawing a fanciful picture, he might say that even such a staunch advocate of race privilege as Sir James Stephen, in his letters to the *Times*, said that the law in 1872, as it stood, amounted to a practical denial of justice. It was accordingly resolved in 1872 to alter the law to some slight and almost unappreciable extent, and it was resolved to confer upon some of the local Courts in the interior of the country a small and limited jurisdiction in the case of some very petty and minor offences committed by Englishmen. For instance, a District Judge—the highest judicial authority over many hundred square miles, who had the power of life and death over Natives of India, and who could sentence a Native to transportation for life, or sentence him to death—was only empowered to sentence a European criminal to prison for twelve months. That there should be these distinctions seemed a shame in the eyes of the Indian people. (Cheers.) It was a shame that a Judge who should be deemed good enough to hang a Native of India should not be good enough to send a European thief or burglar to prison for more than

twelve months. (Hear, hear.) But there was a further distinction introduced in 1872. The operation of this limited jurisdiction was further limited by a new distinction of race then introduced. It was then enacted that even these small powers were only to be exercised by those of the Judges who were themselves Englishmen. At the time of this new limitation or restriction, it was described as a compromise, and was avowedly defended as a temporary expedient. It must also be remembered that at that time no Native members of the service had attained to the rank which would have otherwise qualified them for the exercise of these powers. But the condition of things had altered since then, and this question had now come within the region of practical politics. Now some of his countrymen who had won their way into the service by open competition in this country had, after years of faithful work, been deemed fit by the Government to be appointed to high judicial offices. (Cheers.) But on account of the disqualification to which he had referred, difficulties had arisen in regard to the position of those gentlemen. In all the more important and desirable towns and districts of India, there was a more or less large European population, and one or two things must happen. Either there must be an absence of legal machinery for bringing English offenders to justice, or those Native officials must be for ever relegated to remote or out-of-the-way places, where Europeans did not often care to go, and where, therefore, the difficulty would not very likely to arise. Now, a case of this kind happened only the other day

An Indian Member of the Covenanted Service, Mr. Dutt, a gentleman of whom he might tell them that at a competitive examination, held in London in 1869, he beat almost all his English competitors, and came out second in order of merit—this gentleman, after fourteen years of honourable and distinguished service, was appointed to magisterial office in the city of Dacca, the capital of Eastern Bengal. Soon after the appointment, it was represented to the Government that there was a large number of Europeans in that city, that many cases in which Englishmen were involved often arose, and that, if Mr. Dutt were sent to Dacca, difficulties and inconveniences would arise. The result of those representations was that Mr. Dutt's appointment was forthwith cancelled, and he was eventually sent to one of the most inaccessible and marshy and unhealthy districts in Bengal. (Shame.) This was done by Mr. Thompson, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who was one of the chief leaders of the opposition to the Ilbert Bill; and yet that gentleman was not ashamed to assert that the present state of the law leads to no administrative inconveniences, because, forsooth, the number of Native Magistrates was at the present time limited, and that the Government could find employment for them in out-of-the-way and undesirable places. He put it to the meeting whether the present system had not involved practical hardship, and that there was a substantial grievance of which India had a right to complain. (Cheers.) Then they were obliged to ask why was it that these gentlemen should labour under

these disqualifications. In ability, integrity, culture, and capacity, they were admitted on the highest authority to be in no way inferior to their English colleagues. (Cheers.) They had had the advantage of an education and a residence in this country, and they had gone back to their Native land full of kindly feeling towards English people, and full of gratitude for the kindness, courtesy, and hospitality with which they had met with in this country. (Cheers.) Their ~~law~~ ^{Intelligence} was unquestionable, for they were themselves the product of that Western culture and education which had been happily engrafted on the ancient civilisation of Hindustan. (Applause.) They held the position to their countrymen of reformers and regenerators of their Native land, and they were the natural mediators and interpreters between English people and the masses of their own people. (Cheers.) Why was it that these men were to be insulted by being told that they were not to be entrusted to decide petty Police cases in which an Englishman happened to be involved. If they were told that there were occasional false and trumped-up cases to be found in India, who would be better qualified to act as a Magistrate, to detect falsehood, and to sift the grain from the chaff, than a man who knew the ways of his own people, who was intimately conversant with the language of the land, to whom the slightest peculiarities of speech and demeanour of a witness would have a significance that would be totally lost on a foreign Judge. (Applause.) Such various and inconsistent arguments were urged by the opponents

to the Bill, that it was impossible to tell upon which of them they relied, even if they believed in any of them. The noisiest section of the agitators in Calcutta had been telling them over and over again, *ad nauseam*, that the Native Judges would be too hard upon Englishmen ; but they found that no less an authority than Mr. Thompson, a Lieutenant-Governor, who led the Opposition in the Viceregal Council, said that Natives could not have this power because they would be unduly lenient towards the English prisoners. (Laughter.) In the face of these inconsistent and diametrically opposed statements, what was the legitimate inference ? The natural and sound conclusion was that both apprehensions were equally unfounded, and both equally removed from the truth, which he imagined lay half-way between the two, *viz.*, that Native Judges would be neither severe nor lenient, but that they would be only just and impartial. (Cheers.) The whole question was narrowed down to this, that the Natives were to be disqualified, that the Act of 1833 was to be disregarded, and that, the Proclamation of the Queen was to be set at naught, not because any particular mischief was apprehended, but merely because the Anglo-Indian community did not wish this privilege to be taken away from them If there was a laudable desire, as it seemed some suspected, that Europeans wished to be tried by their own countrymen, what would Sir James Stephen say if a similar demand were put forward on behalf of the Native population of India—(cheers)—and what would become of the large salaries, followed by equally liberal

pensions. (Applause.) But he could not believe that even the authority of Mr. Justice Stephen would induce the English nation to uphold an immunity of this kind, and perpetuate an injustice merely because those Anglo-Indians did not like to part with it. Mr. Justice Stephen said something else that was equally startling. He said,—“This privilege inflicts no injury on any one, and it causes no unpopularity, because no injustice.” All he would say was that he never met with any statements more completely at variance with truth, and he utterly and emphatically denied the correctness of all these statements. It did inflict injury, it did cause grave unpopularity, and it did cause the grossest injustice. (Applause.) Mr. Justice Stephen also justified his position by relying upon the fiction and theory of the law, that the prosecutor in a criminal case was nobody, because the Queen was the prosecutor, and the complainant was only regarded as a witness. That might be the fiction of the law; but he doubted very much whether there was any one in this country who would ever dream of denying that a complainant in a criminal case was the most interested party after all. Quibble apart, he thought if the question were fairly put to the people of this country, they would all unhesitatingly admit that there was something politically objectionable in the notion of any difference at all in the administration of criminal justice; that the same system should apply to all, and that absolute equality before the law should, as far as practicable, be established. (Hear, hear.) Then, again, as to the state-

ment that these privileges excited no unpopularity. All he could say was that it took his breath away to read it; and he could only refer them to the whole of the Native Press of India, which teemed with indignant protests upon this subject, and to the reports of the crowded meetings that had been held not only in Bengal, for which Mr. Justice Stephen had unmitigated contempt, but even in the very heart of that Mahratta population, and those martial races of whom, at any rate, Mr. Justice Stephen seemed to stand in dread, and for whose opinion he professed some respect. As a matter of fact, they would be something less than human if they did not complain of those distinctions. (Applause.) Any one who knew anything about India, and who had the candour to speak of what he knew, was aware that these distinctions rankled in the minds of every Native of India, who had an eye to see and a heart to feel. Before he left this part of his case, he would tell them that this privilege, about which so much fuss was being made, had never been recognised at all in the adjacent Island of Ceylon, which was, to all intents and purposes, an Indian province, and that no evil results of any kind had ever happened from Englishmen being subjected to the jurisdiction of Native officials in the Island of Ceylon. (Hear, hear.) Even in India itself, Native Magistrates in the presidency towns and Native Judges of the High Court had for many years past exercised far greater powers over Englishmen than were proposed to be conferred upon the same men in the interior of

the country under the Ilbert Bill ; and yet no one had ever heard a word of complaint against the manner in which these gentlemen had discharged their judicial duties. This privilege only applied to Englishmen, to those Europeans who were British subjects ; but it did not apply to Natives of any other European country. There were thousands of such other Europeans in India who were daily subject to the Native jurisdiction—Frenchmen, Germans, Russians, in fact, Europeans of every nationality, together with men of the mixed caste, the mixed races—and no one had ever heard one word against the way in which justice had been administered in respect of those people. (Applause.) The truth was that there was nothing more to be said about this privilege than that the Anglo-Indian community were reluctant to part with it. That was the sum and substance of the ten columns with which Sir James Stephen had favoured the *Times*, and that was the sum and substance of the arguments which the Judges of the Calcutta High Court had offered upon the subject. But if he was not already trespassing too much upon their attention, they would, perhaps, allow him to give them an illustration of how political passion, prejudice, and partisanship had rendered even the Judges in Calcutta absolutely blind to those considerations of fairness and justice which, in their case, at any rate, one would expect to be paramount. In a long and elaborate Minute which the majority of these Judges had recorded against the Ilbert Bill, they purported to give an extract from the speech of a dis-

tinguished Indian administrator, and after giving it they said they entirely agreed with that gentleman. Now, any one reading the extract in question would imagine that Sir Stuart Bailey, the gentleman who was quoted, was entirely opposed to the Bill. But nothing of the kind. In the sentence which was quoted by the Judges, Sir Stuart Bailey was only stating an argument made use of by the Opposition. In the very next sentence Sir Stuart Bailey proceeded to express his own dissent from it and to express his own entire approval of the principles of the Bill. And yet these Calcutta Judges, sworn dispensers of justice, with power of life and death in their hands, thought it right to quote the first sentence and to omit all that followed. (Shame.) Did they think that conduct of this kind was likely to increase the dignity of the Judges or to enhance the public confidence in their fairness and impartiality? (Hear, hear.) This was only one of many incidents which proved how little there was of reason or of fairness in the opposition which this measure had excited. The fact was that the Anglo-Indian community had only made this small innocuous Bill a pretext and an occasion for a strong and determined attack upon the just and noble policy which was adopted by Parliament fifty years ago, and which, as Lord Northbrook told a Bristol audience the other evening, had ever since been kept steadily in view by all the wisest and best of Indian administrators. (Cheers.) The fact was every act of the present Viceroy of India which has been calculated to give hope to the

Natives of India to augment their contentment and happiness, and to increase their attachment to the British power, had, unfortunately, in an almost equal degree, excited the hostility of those who wished to hold the country as a mere field for their greed and their ambition. The restoration of freedom to the Native Press of India, the knocking off of those shackles which had been forged for the Indian Press by Lord Lytton, the proposal to confer some measure of local self-government upon the more intelligent and important centres of population, the elevation of the most deserving of the children of the soil to offices of emolument and dignity, the encouragement given by Lord Ripon to primary education among the masses, and above all the anxiety shown by him to consult and conciliate the intelligent public opinion of the country—all these things had given deep umbrage to men who sighed for the days of Lord Lytton, utterly unmindful of the fact that another five years of similar misrule and jingoism—(hear, hear)—would probably imperil the very existence of British Empire in India. (Hear, hear.) But they were convinced that the English nation would not suffer itself to be led astray by interested clamour from the path of duty and of justice. It was not often that the Natives of India had an opportunity of acquainting the English public with their thoughts and sentiments, with their hopes and aspirations. They were not represented in Parliament, and from India it was a “far cry” to this country. (Hear hear.) Even when the rare and unwonted spectacle

occurred of a Native of India, like himself, addressing an English audience, it was under circumstances of exceptional difficulties ; for the Native had to speak to them in a language which was foreign to him, and with which at best he must be but very imperfectly acquainted. ("No, no," and cheers.) He was too well acquainted with the disposition of English people to compliment foreigners on their knowledge of the English language to attach a literal value to those cheers. But at any rate, whatever their deficiencies might be, however feeble their powers of expression, they had the satisfaction of knowing that the cause of the voiceless millions of India had been advocated by the greatest and noblest sons of England, from the days of Edmund Burke to those of John Bright. (Loud cheers.) They knew that the policy pursued by their large-hearted Viceroy commanded the entire approval of the greatest statesman of the age, the Prime Minister. (Cheers.) They were convinced that the heart of this great nation was as sound to-day as it was fifty years ago, and that the unerring instincts of the British people would guide them to a just and righteous conclusion. The speaker added— "One word more and I have done. Men like Sir J. Stephen have insisted upon the ethnological differences between ourselves and Englishmen as a conclusive argument for the perpetuation of these offensive distinctions of which we complain ; but they forget what your own scholars and philologists would tell them, that after all the people of India and Englishmen are

descended from the same great Indo-European branch of the human family. (Cheers.) Our ancestors, when, thousands of years ago, they spread over the land of Hindustan, driving before them the aboriginal tribes over the hills and fastnesses where some are still to be found, at that time, our ancestors were a fair-skinned race like yourselves. They looked down with contempt upon the darker races whom they subjugated and upon the difference of complexion which then prevailed. They founded the distinction of caste. You will most of you be surprised to hear that the most ancient word in the Sanskrit language for caste is *varna* or color ; but by a strange retribution of Providence the difference upon which our ancestors prided themselves has now ceased to distinguish their descendants, for the tropical sun which has shone over us for generations and centuries has darkened the hue of our skin and clothed us, as it were, in a sable livery. (Cheers.) But fallen and degenerate as we know we are in many respects—("No, no,")—we still retain some of the moral and intellectual characteristics of the great Aryan race, the race from which we, no less than yourselves, have sprung. (Cheers.) If you have studied to any purpose the history of that ancient land whose destinies Providence has entrusted in your hands, you will avoid the blunders and the crimes which were committed by the ancient conquerors of India. Hindustan has already suffered too much from distinction of caste. For heaven's sake do not inflict upon her the unmitigated curse of a new race of Brahmins, who are to enjoy impunity

for their crimes and to give a loose to their worst **passions** without let or hindrance." (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

LIBERAL LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA.

At the National Club Dinner in London, on the 20th February 1884, the Right Hon'ble the Earl of Kimberley presided. Mr. Walter Wren proposed "Liberal Legislation and Administration in India" and coupled with it the name of Mr. Lalmohun Ghose.

MR. LALMOHUN GHOSE, in responding to the toast on behalf of the people of India, said:—My Lord and gentlemen,—I must at the outset thank my friend, Mr. Wren, for the very kind terms in which he has been pleased to introduce me to you. I need scarcely say that I consider it a great honour to be called upon to respond to this toast. But at the same time I cannot help thinking that it is no small praise of an Administration that it should have so governed or,—at any rate, so endeavoured to govern—a distant and foreign dependency as to enable a Native of that country like myself, intimately connected as I am with the popular party in India, to feel that in undertaking the task of responding to this toast I am only doing that which the public opinion of my country will unanimously support. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, it is often said that India ought not to be made a party question, and I can assure you that my countrymen would heartily rejoice to find both the great political parties equally anxious to do justice to India. I am also bound to admit that, in times past, Conservative statesmen were

not slow to realise the responsibilities of their position. We can not forget that the great Proclamation of 1858, which we now regard as the great Charter of our liberties, was drawn up and composed by the late Lord Derby. It may be that the House of Derby has always been more or less liberal at heart. (Laughter and cheers.) But be that as it may, one thing is abundantly clear. If you take up the speeches and writings of Tory politicians in reference to recent controversies in India, and contrast them with the very different language and very different attitude of their predecessors, the comparison will certainly not be to the advantage of the present leaders of that party. (Hear, hear.) The quarter of a century that has elapsed since 1858, instead of enlarging and broadening their ideas, instead of adding to their wisdom and increasing their sagacity and foresight, seems rather to have narrowed their sympathies and dimmed their political vision. (Cheers.) If, therefore, the people of India have, to a certain extent, abandoned their attitude of neutrality, if we no longer view your political contests in this country with indifference, the fault is not ours. It is because while the Conservatives have succeeded within the last few years in completely alienating our sympathies, the Liberal party has won our confidence and deserved our gratitude by enunciating a policy of justice—(hear, hear)—and, what is of greater importance, by honestly endeavouring to carry out that policy from time to time as occasion served and opportunity offered. (Cheers.) And this change has been

brought about within a very short period. We need not go back further than the time of the late Viceroy, who was described by one of your Lordship's colleagues as being everything that an Indian Viceroy ought not to be. (Cheers.) Indeed, the whole policy of Lord Lytton was calculated to sap the foundations of the Empire; for while, on the one hand, it stirred up the implacable hostility of warlike and fanatical tribes across the frontier, it also put a severe and dangerous strain upon the loyalty of the Indian people themselves. (Cheers.) It was not in the nature of things that a policy of reckless aggression, followed by oppressive taxation and coercive laws,—it was not to be expected that such a policy would be productive of anything but grave and widespread discontent. (Cheers.) The consequence was that towards the close of Lord Lytton's term of office a deep and general gloom hung over India, and when, at last, the news of the dissolution of Parliament reached us in India, four years ago, there was not a thoughtful and patriotic Indian who did not send up from the bottom of his heart a prayer for the success of those who recognised the immutable principles of right and wrong in international dealings, and who made equal justice to all Her Majesty's subjects their watchword and motto. (Cheers.) Well, we all know what happened. The Liberals came into power and with it there came a most welcome and wholesome change for India. Lord Lytton left our shores—(laughter and cheers)—and he was succeeded by a states-

man of a very different stamp. (Hear, hear.) From the moment that Lord Ripon set foot on Indian soil he won the confidence and esteem of the people over whom he was called upon to rule. Nor was this a blind and unreasoning sentiment. It was fully justified by the nature of the policy which he pursued and the objects which he set himself to achieve. To give the country the blessings of peace, to develop its resources, to relieve the overburdened tax-payer, to encourage local industry and private enterprise, to spread the benefits of education among the masses, to consult the enlightened public opinion of the country, and gradually to educate the people in the great task of self-government, these were among the noble objects which Lord Ripon steadily set before himself from the outset of his career. (Cheers.) If any further evidence were needed of his anxiety conscientiously to discharge the duties of his high office, it was furnished by the elevation of some of the most deserving of my countrymen, in spite of bitter opposition, to offices of dignity which had till then been exclusively reserved for Englishmen—(cheers)—and last, but not least, by a measure which was brought forward with the object of removing judicial disqualifications based solely on distinctions of race. (Cheers.) This was the measure popularly known as the Ilbert Bill, to which frequent reference has been already made to-night. I am glad to think that I have had the good fortune of being present here to-night, and of hearing the explanations with which the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India has favoured us; but I regret to say that, even

after those explanations, it is impossible for me or any of my countrymen to regard the compromise with favor. (Hear, hear.) I feel, like His Lordship, that this is not a fitting occasion for any lengthy discussion of this or any other controversial questions. (Hear, hear.) But whatever our opinions may be in regard to the modifications—or, shall I say, the mutilations—which this unfortunate Bill has undergone, and probably those opinions are shared by a good many sound Liberals in this country—(loud cheers)—I rejoice to think, after the observations that have fallen from the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India, that no portion of the responsibility belongs either to Her Majesty's Government or to the noble Lord who has done us the honour of presiding here to-night. (Cheers.) I am also happy to be able to add that, keen as was our disappointment in the first instance, and deeply as we still regret the want of firmness which dictated these unfortunate concessions to a mischievous and truculent agitation, my countrymen have not been slow to recognise and to make the amplest allowances for the difficulties with which Lord Ripon found himself face to face. Opposed from the beginning by the bulk of the Civil Service, which has always been, and, I fear, always will be, opposed to every extension of freedom in India—(hear, hear)—denounced in the most violent language by irresponsible and unscrupulous critics, and thwarted both openly and in secret by Lieutenant-Governors—(hear, hear)—and his own immediate official subordinates, the position of the Viceroy was by no means an enviable

one. (Hear, hear.) Matters were made worse and the situation became still more untenable by reason of an unhappy exchange with Egypt—an exchange by which Egypt had everything to gain and India everything to lose—(hear, hear,)—I allude to the departure of Sir Evelyn Baring. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, under these circumstances, though victory would have been all the more glorious and honourable, failure may perhaps be excused. The people of India are not unreasonable, and whatever our other faults may be, a want of gratitude for benefits conferred has never been reckoned among their number. (Cheers.) My countrymen feel that though they may, for a time, afford to lose an Ilbert Bill, they cannot afford to lose a Ripon. (Hear, hear.) We know that in the present Viceroy we have a just and conscientious Governor, and a true friend whose name will yet, in spite of passing clouds, go down to posterity as a not unworthy successor of a Bentinck, a Canning, and a Lawrence—(cheers)—names that are still embalmed in the memories of a grateful people. (Cheers.) My Lord, we feel confident that neither Lord Ripon nor Her Majesty's Government will be deterred or disheartened by reason of a single check or failure of this kind. Indeed, it is hardly possible now for the Government to retrace its steps. The spread of Western education in India is producing wonderful results. It is fast welding together the various races of India into one common nationality—(hear, hear,)—it is awakening a new national life, and it is also necessarily enlarging the scope of

our aspirations. (Hear, hear.) The great question for the future is, whether India is to be governed merely for the benefit of a noisy but small and insignificant class who are unable to rise above selfish and sordid considerations—(hear, hear,)—or whether it should not rather be governed for the welfare of its vast population. (Cheers.) In proportion as you pursue a policy of justice and provide a legitimate field for the gratification of our growing aspirations, you will place the loyalty of the Indian people on a firm and sure foundation. (Cheers.) In conclusion, I have only to say that I believe the longer Lord Ripon continues in India and Her Majesty's Government continue in power in this country, the better it will be for the true and lasting progress both of England and of India. (Loud cheers.)

THE ILBERT BILL COMPROMISE.

A PUBLIC meeting was held at the Kensington Town Hall, on Friday, 1st April 1884, to consider the Indian view of Lord Ripon's policy. The hall was crowded. The proceedings commenced at 8 P.M. The chair was taken by J. F. B. Firth, Esq., M.P.

The Chairman said:—I have much pleasure in introducing to you, to move the first resolution, a gentleman very familiar to many of you—a gentleman who has upon many occasions represented Indian subjects in England, who has the confidence of our Indian fellow-subjects, and who is withal a man of great skill and ability—I mean Mr. Lalmohun Ghose. (Hear, hear, and great applause.)

MR. LALMOHUN GHOSE, who was received with cheers, said:—Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—Allow me at the very outset to tender to our Chairman our very best thanks for the sympathetic language in which he has spoken of the aspirations and the sentiments of my countrymen; and our hearty thanks to you also, ladies and gentlemen, for having come here to-night in order to acquaint yourselves with what is going on in India, and to give us an opportunity of making clear to you some of our wishes and feelings. It seems to me, gentlemen, almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of meetings such as this, which serve the purpose of bringing the two countries and the two nations closer together; and to enable my countrymen in India when they hear of these proceedings, to feel that the English nation sympathises with them, and that you in this country are anxious to do all in your power to secure to us the benefits of good

government, and of the impartial administration of just and equal laws. (Hear, hear.) Well, gentlemen, these expressions of sympathy on the part of English audiences such as I have now the honour of addressing are always of immense value, but they are doubly welcome to us at the present moment, because, as you are aware, we have just passed through a period of fierce controversy, which, in my opinion, is all the more to be regretted because it has scarcely led to any adequate results, and has been productive of what might almost be described as a *fiasco*. Well, Sir, upon that subject I will have to address a few words to you by-and-bye, and I only trust that, in the observations which I may make, I shall be able to express myself without causing any needless irritation to our opponents, or awakening memories which I am anxious may sink into oblivion. Well, gentlemen, I am anxious that on my return home to India, I may be able to tell my countrymen that they have the sympathies of the English nation—(applause)—on their side; and nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to add that both the great political parties in this country were equally anxious to do justice to India. I cannot forget, gentlemen, that this was so in times past. (Hear, hear.) As our Chairman has just now reminded us, the great and gracious Proclamation of Her Majesty the Queen, from which he has read out to you certain extracts—that Proclamation was drawn up by a Conservative statesman; but, Sir, times are changed, and the younger and more irresponsible Tories of the present day seem altogether to

have departed from the better traditions of their party. Well, at any rate, it is not the fault of India if Indian questions have, to a certain extent, come to be mixed up with the strife of political parties. (Hear, hear) It is not our fault that a man like Lord Lytton was sent out as Viceroy of India, nor can it be expected that the Indian people should be grateful to the party, or to the statesman who imposed on us the most oppressive forms of taxation, and who looked on with indifference at the indescribable sufferings of our people, while millions of them perished of starvation. (Cries of "shame.") Well, gentlemen, the consequence was that, before we had three or four years of that administration, a dark cloud began to gather over the whole Indian Empire, and the only gleam of hope that shone upon us was derived from the attitude of the great Liberal party. (Applause.) Well, gentlemen, then came the dissolution of Parliament four years ago, and I can assure you that I do not exaggerate in the least when I tell you that from every Indian home, from every Indian heart, there went forth fervent wishes for the success of the Liberal party! (Cheers and applause.) Well, we know what took place at that time. At any rate, in India we had the intense satisfaction of getting rid of a *regime* which was identified in our eyes with all that was unjust and oppressive and having sent out to us a representative of the Queen like Lord Ripon—(intense enthusiasm)—of whom I will only say this, that in almost every respect he presented a wholesome and refreshing contrast to

his predecessor. Well, gentlemen, from the outset of his career, Lord Ripon succeeded in winning the confidence of the Indian people by his earnest desire to promote the lasting welfare of those over whom he was called upon to rule. Lord Ripon's first desire naturally was to bring to a speedy termination the war which had caused so much needless suffering, and which had swallowed up the revenues wrung from a starving population ; and with the restoration of peace there naturally came a most welcome diminution of taxation ; especially was this noticeable in that great necessary of life—salt. Private enterprise was encouraged and an impetus given to local and Native industries. In one word, gentlemen, plenty and prosperity followed in the wake of peace. But this was not all. As soon as Lord Ripon had made himself acquainted with the true state of affairs, for he was anxious not to proceed too hastily, he knocked off the fetters that had been imposed upon our Press by his predecessor, and reversed the short-sighted policy which, instead of being anxious, as it ought to have been, to know what was passing in the minds of the Indian people, had put restrictions on the Indian Press—(Shame)—and had as it were nailed down the safety valve. Well, gentlemen, Lord Ripon gave further proofs of his earnestness by recognising the claims of some of the ablest of my countrymen to high offices from which we had been hitherto excluded, and also by consulting public opinion and taking the people, as it were, into his confidence. He further endeared himself by those measures, some of which the

Chairman has already referred to, namely, by encouraging the spread of education among the masses of our people, by introducing a liberal scheme of local self-government, and also by bringing forward this Ilbert Bill, which, although of very small dimensions, was regarded both by ourselves and our political opponents as the embodiment of a most important principle, and as the precursor of much-needed reforms in regard to the administration of criminal justice in India. Well, Sir, that Bill has ended in a way which can hardly be described as satisfactory. (Hear, hear.) It was a Bill brought forward to remove certain judicial qualifications attaching to Native Indian Judges and Magistrates in regard to the trial of English prisoners charged with certain petty offences. Well, even if that Bill had been carried out in its original form, it would not have affected more than eight or nine Indian Magistrates throughout India ; but small as were the practical consequences of the Bill, we nevertheless attached considerable importance to it, because it seemed to us to be a step in the right direction, and because it paved the way for further reforms ; and it enabled us to hope that we were at length approaching the time when there should no longer be one law for the Englishman and another for the Indian, and when all classes of Her Majesty's subjects were to live under the same laws, and be amenable to the same tribunals. If you will allow me, gentlemen, I will quote to you a short Section from an Act of Parliament that was passed in 1833, and which has a direct bearing on these questions. Section 85 of the

Act of 1833 runs thus :—" And wherever the removal of restriction on the intercourse of Europeans within the said territory will render it necessary to provide against any mischiefs or dangers that may arise therefrom : be it therefore enacted that the Governor-General in Council shall, and he is hereby required by laws and regulations to, provide with possible convenient speed for the protection of the Natives from insult or outrage." Then the next Section of the same Act of Parliament proceeds to say—I have not the extract with me at present—but the Section proceeds to say that all subjects of His Majesty—it was then the reign of William the Fourth—that all subjects of His Majesty, whether of British, or Indian, or mixed parentage, were to be equally eligible to all offices in the public service. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, you have also heard from our Chairman extracts from that noble and gracious Proclamation which was issued by our common Sovereign in 1858, and which was framed in language worthy of this country ; but unfortunately, gentlemen, for the fulfilment of the hopes that were raised by them, unfortunately for us, the resident English population in India, both at the time of the passing of that Act and afterwards, have given repeated proofs of that same domineering and intolerant spirit which they have displayed in connection with the present controversy, of the same love of power, and of the same anxiety to enjoy a total immunity as regards any offences that they might commit. In fact, whenever the slightest attempt has been made to do justice to

the Indian people, we have had a repetition of the same unscrupulous tactics, the same threats, and the same violent language, and the consequence is that, in spite of Acts of Parliament, in spite of noble proclamations by the Queen, the assurances and pledges contained in those documents have remained to this day unredeemed and unfulfilled. Well, gentlemen, so long ago as the year 1834, the Court of Directors, in a despatch to the Governor-General of India, pointed out in forcible language, referring to that Act of Parliament out of which I have read, that there could be neither equality nor protection for the Natives where justice was not equally and on equal terms accessible to all. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, there were many powerful speeches delivered on the passing of that Act of Parliament, and among those speeches one of the most eloquent, perhaps, was that of Lord Macaulay, delivered from his place in Parliament. I will, with your permission, read a sentence or two from that speech, because it puts the case in a far clearer light than any language of mine could possibly do. Lord Macaulay said on that occasion:— “The license of the Government will now no longer be necessary to persons who desire to reside in the settled provinces of India. The power of arbitrary deportation is withdrawn. Unless, therefore, we mean to leave the Natives exposed to the tyranny and insolence of every profligate adventurer who may visit the East, we must place the Europeans under the same power which legislates for the Hindu. (Hear, hear.) No man loves

political freedom more than I ; but a privilege enjoyed by a few individuals in the midst of a vast population who do not enjoy it ought not to be called freedom. (Hear, hear.) It is tyranny!" (Loud cheers.) But, Sir, the state of things which was described and condemned in such eloquent language by those eminent authorities, has continued almost unaltered up to the present moment. The Ilbert Bill was an attempt to remedy a portion of these great evils, but we have seen that the Government of India has found itself unable even to carry that small Bill through. It was a very small Bill, even as originally conceived ; it grew beautifully less by degrees, and now it has dwindled down almost to nothing. Well, Sir, when this compromise was first made known, my countrymen naturally felt considerable disappointment. Many of you may have read in the *Daily News* that a correspondent of that journal, telegraphing from the North-Western Provinces of India, stated that he found everywhere a feeling of angry disappointment. Well, gentlemen, I must confess that, for a time, it seemed as if the feelings of loyalty to the Throne, and of grateful admiration for the Viceroy, were about to give way to resentment and sullen discontent ; it seemed as if my countrymen were about to lose all faith in the sincerity of English statesmen, or, at any rate, in their capacity and power to do justice to us when the Anglo-Indian community were interested in the perpetuation of injustice and oppression. But, gentlemen, when we had time for reflection, and after the first outburst of disappointment, better counsels prevailed. We recognised

the earnestness with which Lord Ripon had laboured for the good of the people. (Cheers.) We recognised the difficulties which the Viceroy had had to encounter. We felt that a Viceroy, however good and conscientious he might be—and none could be better or more conscientious than Lord Ripon—we felt that such a Viceroy, unless he also happened to be gifted with more than ordinary strength of mind, would, perhaps, be powerless to do much good to us, if he is to be thwarted at every step, and opposed openly and in secret by the whole pack of permanent officials in India. I might go further, gentlemen, and say that it is hardly of much use for you to send out a good man to India like Lord Ripon, if he is to have as his immediate subordinates men like the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal—men who are constantly insulting the Indian people by openly professing their contempt for Indian national sentiment and popular feeling. (Cries of "Shame!" and hisses.) And yet these are the men who, because they have the power of conferring lucrative appointments upon sordid and venal correspondents, have the satisfaction of finding themselves bespattered with fulsome flattery in the columns of the *Times*. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, the position of the Viceroy was rendered, if possible, still more untenable by reason of the unfortunate departure from India last year of one of the best men who ever went out there from this country; I allude to Sir Evelyn Baring. (Hear, hear.) And he was succeeded by a man who had had a career in Egypt, but whose Egyptian antecedents were not very promising, and

whose first official act in India was to force this inglorious compromise on the Viceroy. Well, gentlemen, the events of the last few months have taught us one lesson more clearly than another, it is this, that whatever you in this country might think or wish to do, whatever policy of justice or generosity Parliament may solemnly enunciate, there never can be any real hope of justice or good government for India, unless you make up your minds to break up and demolish that exclusive and bureaucratic service, the members of which enjoy despotic power, who drain the wealth of the country and misgovern and oppress us to an extent that you can have no idea of. (Cheers.) But to return once more, and only for a moment, to this Ilbert Bill. It proposed, as you know, to remove at once and completely all judicial qualifications based solely on distinction of race. But, gentlemen, under the compromise that has now been entered into, these disqualifications will continue just as before in the case of all officers below a certain rank, namely, the rank of District Magistrates. Now, gentlemen, it is enacted that whenever an English prisoner is brought up before a District Magistrate, no matter how trivial the offence may be with which he is charged—with being drunk or disorderly in the streets—he may claim to be tried by a Jury, a majority of whom must be composed of his own countrymen. (A voice of "No, no.") A gentleman behind me says "No." But I can only say that the statement I have made is perfectly correct, and I am astonished to find that a gentleman like Mr. Foggo, intimately connected as

he is with an Indian Reform Association, should not have taken the trouble to acquaint himself with the exact terms of this compromise, and that he should take it upon himself to interrupt and contradict me on insufficient information and imperfect knowledge. (Laughter and cheers.) Well, gentlemen, it comes to this, that while a Native of India may be sentenced to capital punishment without the intervention of a Jury, the same Magistrate may not of himself impose a shilling fine on a drunken Englishman. (Shame, shame.) And you ought to remember, gentlemen, that, in many parts of India, it is no easy matter to call together an English Jury ; and, if this right comes to be largely exercised, instead of facilitating, it will paralyse the administration of justice. And then, again, gentlemen, you must bear in mind that even when a Magistrate is just barely able to empanel a Jury, the Jury in most cases must necessarily be composed of the personal friends of the prisoner, of men who, in connection with this very controversy, have displayed such hostility towards the Indian people that it would be idle to expect from them anything like impartiality in cases between Englishmen and Natives of India. Well, gentlemen, I had an opportunity the other evening, at a House Dinner of the National Liberal Club, to hear the noble Lord, the Secretary of State for India, defend the compromise. Lord Kimberley's defence amounted to this, that inasmuch as the new law only referred to District Magistrates, and because those officers, having a variety of other duties to perform, seldom took up

any judicial work, the evils which we anticipate would not, perhaps, be much felt in practice. Now it struck me at the time that it was a very damaging kind of defence to make ; for it amounts to this, that the few men who are now raised to a footing of nominal equality with their European colleagues are not expected to exercise the power that has been theoretically conferred upon them—(hear, hear,)—while those who really do any judicial work continue to remain disqualified as before. In other words, the Bill is to remain a dead letter, and is defended on the ground that it is expected to be practically inoperative. (Shame.) And, gentlemen, this is exactly the view that was taken by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, one of the chief leaders of the Anglo-Indian Opposition, who said, from his place in the Legislative Council, almost in a tone of exultation and triumph—(hisses)—who said that “the Government would take care that no Native would be appointed Magistrate and Collector of a District in which there was not a European Joint-Magistrate capable of taking up such cases. . . . therefore, the present law would practically be inoperative even after the Bill was passed.” Under the law now passed you will see, therefore, that the Government of India—I entirely except Lord Ripon and Mr. Ilbert (cheers) whose hands were forced, but speaking collectively, the Government of India—in their anxiety to please all parties, have succeeded in pleasing none. (Hear, hear.) But, gentlemen, notwithstanding the many and ~~serious~~ objections that may be taken to this compromise,

my countrymen have now begun to feel that it contains theoretically at least an assertion of that principle of equality on which the Bill was originally based, and we are anxious to make every allowance for the difficulties of the Viceroy, and to avoid doing anything calculated to embarrass the best administration we have had in India for a long time—an administration of which I am happy to be able to say, notwithstanding this one unfortunate blunder, that it continues to enjoy the unabated confidence of my countrymen. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, under these circumstances we are willing to adopt this compromise, at least, as a temporary solution of the difficulty, if only the Government will now, as an act of justice towards us, equalize the situation by extending the right of trial by Jury equally to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects without distinction of race. (Loud cheers.) It must be also borne in mind that we do not demand Jury trial in petty cases, such as has been conceded to Europeans—(hear, hear)—but only in serious cases as in this country, and indeed under every civilized system of jurisprudence. In the next place, the difficulties anticipated in connection with the constitution of an English Jury are not at all likely to arise when you are empanneling a Native Jury in India. When you have to call together a Native Jury, your choice is absolutely unlimited; it is not restricted, as in the other case, to the four or five men who are, perhaps, the only Englishmen to be found within a circle of many hundred miles—(hear, hear)—but you have

a whole nation to choose from. (Cheers.) The system has been already tried in many parts of India, and it has been found to be eminently successful. But under the existing law it is left entirely to the discretion of the Local Governments to declare whether a particular district is or is not to enjoy this privilege. What we now demand is that, instead of leaving it to the discretion of men like the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who are opposed to every extension of freedom in India, the Government should by legislation extend one uniform system throughout the country. (Cheers.) Then, again, gentlemen, intimately connected with this question, there is another reform which is, if possible, even more urgently required, and which is now unanimously demanded by the entire population of India. It is the separation, as far as practicable, of executive from judicial functions, which are now frequently combined in the same officer--a combination that is a fruitful source of gross judicial scandals and grave miscarriages of justice. Under our present system, our Magistrates are not only judicial officers, as in this country, but they are also vested with large executive powers. The consequence is that they have often to initiate a prosecution in their executive capacity, as head of the Police, as chief Revenue Officer, or as chief of the local Municipality, and then they are found in the anomalous position of having to try as Magistrates the very cases in which they are virtually the prosecutors. Well, Magistrates are but men, and as might be expected, under these circumstances, cases of gross injustice and

oppression are daily occurring. I will, with your permission, if I have not already trespassed too long upon your patience—(cheers)—I should like to give you an instance. In the town of Chittagong, in Bengal, the Magistrate of the district, who was also Chairman of the Municipality, proposed certain schemes in connection with the sewage of the town. His proposals were opposed in the Municipal Board, a Native member of the Board leading the Opposition. Well, opposition is a thing which Anglo-Indian officials cannot brook, and this Magistrate revenged himself upon the leader of the Opposition by appointing him a special constable, and ordering him to mount guard over certain sewage works, which no high-caste Hindu could do without at once losing caste. The unfortunate Native Municipal Commissioner accordingly addressed a letter of protest to the Magistrate, praying to be relieved of duties which he could not perform without loss of caste. Well, this model Magistrate started a criminal prosecution against the unfortunate man, charging him with various offences under the Indian Penal Code, and then himself presided over the trial in his judicial capacity, and would have probably sent him to prison but for the timely interference of a higher court. (Shame.) Well, gentlemen, I could multiply instances of this kind almost indefinitely. But I shall spare you that infliction, and only content myself with reading a very short letter which I have received from a retired and eminent Judge of the Calcutta High Court, Sir John Phear—(cheers)—than

whom no man is entitled to speak with greater authority on questions like this. (Hear, hear.) Sir John Pheat says :—“ The movement for promoting as complete a separation as can be of executive and judicial functions in the system of Mofussil administration has my hearty sympathy. Experience has convinced me that it is practically impossible for one and the same officer, however conscientious he may be, to discharge both functions with independency of the one from the other. It is almost inevitable that the executive portion of him, so to speak, should constantly be using, in furtherance of executive work, the judicial power belonging to him in the other capacity, and that when acting judicially in what may be termed his own cases, he should not always be successful in divesting himself of the spirit and bias of the prosecutor. And even when the decision of the judicial officers is unimpeachable on its merits, popular opinion is often disposed to attribute it to some personal motive of the executive officer rather than to its proper ground of justice. In both these ways it comes about that Mofussil administration is much too frequently the subject of serious and not seldom well-grounded complaint, which would be avoided, greatly to the credit and advantage of the English rule, and to the benefit of the people, if the separation of functions which your meeting advocates were carried into effect.” (Cheers.) Well, Sir, these are some of the questions which are engrossing public attention in India, and for the satisfactory solution of which we have to look to the support of public opinion in England. (Cheers.)

Unfortunately, we know by experience that the Viceroy, good and conscientious as he is, is occasionally unable to stem the tide of Anglo-Indian passion and prejudice. Then, again, as regards the India Office, judging by the speech which Lord Kimberley made to the Indian deputation that waited on him yesterday—a speech to which I listened with great pain (hear, hear)—the India Office does not seem to be troubled with any very overflowing sympathies for the Indian people. Well, gentlemen, we are compelled in this predicament to turn to the just and generous instincts of the English nation as our best safeguard—(cheers)—and our best protection, both against the interested motives of selfish cliques in India and against the narrow ideas and restricted horizon of officials. (Cheers.) Sir, English education is producing wonderful results in India. It is fast unifying the various races and making them feel that after all they have common interests and aspirations which they can only win by concerted action, Public spirit and patriotism is being once more re-awakened and revivified. It is not as if you were dealing with a race of barbarians without latent capacity and without a history. (Cheers.) We had expected to-night on the platform one of the greatest of living Oriental scholars—(cheers)—and if Professor Max Müller had been here he could have told you far better than I can that, low as we may have sunk at the present day and degenerate as we may be, we have had a great record in the past. (Loud cheers.) In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you, with all the

earnestness which I am capable of commanding, that if you follow a policy of justice and generosity ; if, by example and by education, and by just and generous treatment, you raise us once more to a position not wholly unworthy of our past history, you will not only entitle yourselves to the lasting gratitude of countless millions, but you will also be conducting at the same time to the stability of the British Empire. (Hear hear, and loud cheers.)

Mr. Ghose then moved the following resolution, which was carried :—
"That this meeting, while cordially approving of the principle of the Ilbert Bill, which recognises the equality of European and Native Indian Magistrates, regrets that the application of the principle is impaired by the compromise entered into with the opponents of the Bill, and therefore hopes that, as an act of justice to the Indian people, the Government of India will take steps to extend trial by Jury equally to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, and to disconnect as far as practicable the combination of judicial with executive functions in the same officer, which now frequently leads to miscarriages of justice."

REPRESENTATION OF INDIAN INTERESTS IN PARLIAMENT.

On the morning of August 7th, 1884, at the Westminster Palace Hotel, several Hindu gentlemen, resident in England, gave a breakfast to a number of friends who take special interest in Indian affairs. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, M.P., presided, and amongst the company were Mr. Woodall, M.P., Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, Mr. Summers, M.P., Rev. John Moffat, Mr. Heywood, M.P., Mr. J. H. McCarthy, M.P., Mr. Borlase, M.P., Mr. Illingworth, M.P., Mr. S. Smith, M.P., Mr. Cropper, M.P., Mr. Brogden, M.P., Mr. R. D. Sethna, Mr. A. K. Sethna, Mr. P. H. Pattak, Mr. Lalmohun Ghose, Mr. H. E. Banatwalla, Mr. N. Dey, His Highness the Rajah Rampal Singh, Mr. Shapurji Sorabji, Mr. K. D. Naigamwalla, Mr. F. W. Chesson, Sir John Gorrie, Major Evans Bell, Mr. M. B. Dadabhoy, Mr. Syed Habib Ullah, the Hon'ble Mahomed Ali Rogay, Mr. Fisher Unwin, Mr. Abdul Majid, Mr. G. Foggo, Mr. R. Gowing, Mr. M. N. Bannerji, and Mr. Seymour Keay.

The CHAIRMAN said :—Gentlemen,—I think it was once said that the true use of the wars in which England has engaged is to teach the English people geography, and I am afraid that a similar remark holds good with reference to our own possessions—that we never know much about what is going on in them until the Government of this country produces a revolution, and then we begin to consider. Now it is very wise to try and find out all that we can in times of peace—what the wants and wishes of the people are ; what their grievances are. Therefore, I am glad to see at this breakfast several of my fellow-members of Parliament, and I must say that, although they know a great deal more about India than I do, they feel with me that there is a very great deal that they do not know about it, and that we should be very much better if we knew more of what was going on there. On that account, on behalf of my honorable friends in the House of Commons and the other English gentlemen who are here, I beg very cordially to thank our Indian fellow-subjects who have got up this breakfast and have invited us to come here. I fancy that it is somewhat unusual to see so many of our Indian fellow-subjects assembled : I cannot recall any similar thing in London or elsewhere, and I think it is a very interesting occasion. We have here a few Hindu and Muhammadan gentlemen of mature age, but most of our freinds are young men. I may say that young India is at the present time in the ascendant at our breakfast-table, and as Mr. Disraeli once said, the “youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity.” We see here these young men who probably in future life will take some part in conducting the public affairs of their

own country. That seems to me the noblest occupation that any one can engage in—the endeavour to make just laws for the country to which they belong; and I have no doubt that, as time goes on, our young friends here will take a prominent part in subjects of that kind. As I am speaking of these young friends of ours, I am sure that I may say it is a cause of congratulation to many Englishmen that one of them has achieved the very highest success which can be achieved in the competition in the Civil Service. (Cheers.) I fancy that many of us here are promoters of merit; we do not care where the candidate comes from or what he is (hear, hear); we say, "Let him get all that he deserves;" and "the right man in the right place" is our motto. (Cheers.) I am not going to talk about India, as I have told you, because I feel that it is far too vast a subject for one who has not carefully studied it. All the result of my studies about India brings me to the conclusion that I know very little about it, and I also entertain a suspicion that most Englishmen know very little more. As I believe that, I am all the more happy to think that we shall to-day have the opportunity of hearing these gentlemen. My friend, Mr. Chesson, knows that we, who are members of Parliament, will be called upon shortly to discuss the Indian Budget in the House of Commons. I am very sorry it is put off so late—(hear, hear)—and that we have not better opportunities for discussion, but still we may get a few hints of the way in which we ought to discuss that matter when it comes before the House of Commons. (Hear, hear.) I can only say that I thank our friends for inviting us to this entertainment, and that we shall be most happy to hear any suggestions that they can make to enable us to understand Indian matters better than we do now; and I can assure them that it is the wish of the House of Commons, who would like to know more about it—it is their wish in future years to co-operate with the Indian gentlemen in order to promote wise, just, and beneficial legislation in that immense continent. (Cheers.) I shall now call upon Mr. Lalmohun Ghose, who is well known to you all. (Cheers.)

MR. LALMOHUN GHOSE said:—Sir Wilfrid Lawson and gentlemen,—I believe I am expressing the unanimous opinion of all of us when I say that we are always extremely thankful for such kind and sympathetic words as have just been uttered by our Chairman—(hear, hear)—and I think language of that kind, coming from prominent English politicians, is calculated to go forth to India as a message of peace from this country, and

it is calculated also to inspire our people with some degree of hope, of comfort, and of consolation, in the midst of the irritating controversies and discouraging experiences that we have lately been passing through. (Hear, hear.) Well, Sir, Indian questions, unfortunately, are seldom deemed sufficiently interesting to arrest public attention in this country. Legislative measures of the gravest importance, affecting the prosperity and the happiness of many millions of Her Majesty's subjects, are hurried through our sham Legislative Councils, often against the unanimous protest of the Indian people; but the English nation and the English Parliament know as little, and seem to care as little about them, as if no portion of the responsibility for the good government of that country belongs to them. Misgovernment and oppression meet us at every step. The pettiest English official assumes all the airs and enjoys more than all the immunity of the Czar of all the Russias. (Hear, hear.) Our Courts of Justice are fast losing the respect and confidence of the people. The highest Judges of the land are permitted without rebuke to take part in the bitterest political controversies, and, as a consequence, we find political passion and race-prejudice too often displayed unblushingly from the Judicial Bench. (Hear, hear.) The administration of criminal justice in India is frequently converted into a hideous engine of oppression. Even our Statute Book has one law for the Englishman and another for the Native. But whether infamous sentences of flogging are passed upon young under-

graduates in Bengal—(hear, hear,)—or scores of highly-respected and innocent citizens are sent to penal servitude in Madras—(hear, hear,)—whether we complain of the misgovernment of a Rivers Thompson or of the vagaries of a Grant Duff—(hear, hear,)—not the faintest echo of our cries of distress seems to reach this country. If the people of England ever do hear anything of the condition of India, they hear it from those who are interested in deluding them with fancy pictures of imaginary prosperity. (Hear, hear.) The House of Commons is too busy, too overworked, and I fear, Sir, too little acquainted with Indian affairs, to bestow any attention or to exercise any vigilant control over Government officials. We have no representatives in that assembly—(hear, hear,)—and if any private members in a fit of generosity ask any question on Indian subjects, they only draw forth dry and formal answers from the Indian Minister, carefully prepared for him by the old Anglo-Indian officials who reign at the India Office—(hear, hear,)—answers which either utterly disclaim all knowledge of the subjects, or justify, or at least endeavour to justify, the action of the local authorities by some ingenious distortion of the facts. (Hear, hear.) You, Sir, have also alluded to the fact that even the annual debate on the Indian Budget is reserved for the very last days of the Session, when empty benches testify to the interest and the sense of responsibility of the House of Commons in reference to India. Well, Sir, the apathy and indifference which are so generally felt in reference to India would be

utterly disheartening to us if it were not for occasional words of comfort from prominent English statesmen, which enable us to hope that better days may yet be in store for India. (Cheers.) Sir, it is in that hope that we have met together to-day, with a view to consult and discuss, with those of our English friends who have honored us to-day with their company, some of the most important Indian topics of the day. (Cheers.) The question to which I wish to invite your attention particularly to-day is one that has been recently the subject of considerable agitation in India; and it is perhaps of more intrinsic importance than the Ilbert Bill—I refer to the free and impartial admission of my countrymen to the Civil Service. (Hear, hear.) We know that it was promised by Act of Parliament just ~~five~~ years ago. We know that it was expressly affirmed in the Royal Proclamation of 1858. We know also that the Act of 1833 has not yet been repealed, nor the Royal Proclamation of 1858 rescinded. But when we ask ourselves, What have we gained? How have we benefited by the promises contained in these documents? it is impossible to return a satisfactory reply—(hear, hear,)—for it is obviously worse than useless to make declarations of that kind, tending to excite the hopes and stimulate the aspirations of our people, if you suffer those promises to be nullified by means of rules and regulations which shut us out of the service, although the law declares us eligible. (Hear, hear.) If you examine this question for a moment, you will see that hitherto England has only given us with one

hand what she has taken away with the other. (Hear, hear.) In the first place, the admission to the public service—I do not speak of the inferior service created by Lord Lytton (hear, hear,) but the admission to the ordinary Covenanted Civil Service of India—is by means of a competitive examination held in London. So that, to begin with, a Native of India, in order to prove his fitness for the public service of his own country, is required to undertake a long and expensive journey, to traverse half the globe, and to make up his mind for a lengthened residence in this country, on the mere chance of passing a most difficult examination, in which he has to compete with English youths in their own language and literature. (Cheers.) Well, Sir, these are heavy odds to fight against—(loud cheers)—but, nevertheless, a few of my countrymen have been found, from time to time, enterprising enough to come over to this country, at considerable sacrifice, in order to try their luck at these examinations, and, what is still more remarkable, a very fair proportion, heavily handicapped as they were, have succeeded in passing that examination. (Cheers.) Their numbers have necessarily been very limited—not more than ten or twelve, I believe. But even that small number has been an eyesore to the Indian bureaucracy, and to those who have hitherto enjoyed the sweets of monopoly. And the consequence is that at every step, whenever a Native of India has succeeded, some fresh regulation has been introduced in order to make the recurrence of such an event a still more difficult thing in the future. (Hear, hear.)

Now let us take the question of age. You will readily admit that if a Native of India has to compete in such subjects as English Composition, English Literature, and English History, and if you further bear in mind that the English language is necessarily the medium of examination in every other subject, you will readily understand that the standard of age for the candidates becomes a question of vital importance to my countrymen—(hear, hear)—for if you require a foreigner to learn your language, and to learn it so well as to hold his own against the Native, you must give him time to acquire that knowledge. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Therefore, the more you reduce this limit of age, the more enormously you increase the difficulties of Indians. (Cheers.) How have we been treated in this respect? Every successive scheme has been worse and worse. When this system of competitive examinations was first inaugurated in 1853 by Act of Parliament, a committee (of which Lord Macaulay was the Chairman) was requested, among other things, to report as to what was the most desirable standard of age. Lord Macaulay recommended a maximum limit of twenty-three and a minimum of eighteen, adding, however, that, except in very rare and exceptional cases, it would not be desirable to admit a lad at the early age of eighteen. That wise recommendation was accepted by the India Board which was then presided over by Sir Charles Wood, and the rule continued in force until 1859 or 1860, when a young Parsee student for the first time came

over from India with the view of competing in ~~the~~ next examination. He was a very clever and promising young man, and every one considered that he had a very fair chance of success. But soon after his arrival in this country, without any previous notice or intimation, the age limit was suddenly lowered from twenty-three to twenty-two, and this young man, after all the expense and trouble which he had undergone, suddenly found himself disqualified by a stroke of the pen. (Hear, hear.) This was a very hard case, but a single isolated instance of that kind, standing by itself, would not, perhaps, justify us in inferring that it was intentional. Now let us come down to 1863, when the first Native of India, Mr. Satyendra Nath Tagore, passed this examination. What happened on that occasion? Sir, of the thirteen or fourteen subjects that are prescribed for these examinations, in the great majority the Native of India is at a considerable disadvantage as compared with English competitors; but there are only two out of the thirteen or fourteen in which the advantage may be said to be on his side. These are the classical languages of the East—Sanskrit and Arabic, which occupy somewhat the same position in our Universities as Latin and Greek in this country, with this exception, however, that it is very rare for any of my countrymen to learn both of those languages, the Hindu having a preference for Sanskrit and the Mahomedan generally taking up Arabic. (Hear, hear.) Well, it was found that Mr. Tagore, the successful candidate, has obtained

a large number of marks in the Sanskrit language, and it was consequently decided to lower the number of marks in both Sanskrit and Arabic from 500 to 375 each. But this was not all. Two years later the age limit was further reduced from twenty-two to twenty-one, which had again the effect of disqualifying one or two Indians who were then studying in England. Now these successive changes, tending to operate more and more harshly against my countrymen, naturally caused considerable dissatisfaction in India—(hear, hear,)—and produced the impression that our admission into the Service was viewed with disfavour by the authorities. Nevertheless, my countrymen, notwithstanding the difficulties that were imposed upon them, continued to try the experiment, and I am glad to say sometimes with signal success. (Cheers.) But, Sir, the India Office was again equal to the occasion. Although out of deference to the outcry in India, they had been obliged to retrace their steps as regards the reduction of the marks for Sanskrit and Arabic, they still found out a more effectual method of closing the door of the Service against my countrymen. They lowered the age from twenty-one to nineteen. Now, as regards this last reduction, there is one very significant fact to which I wish to invite your attention. Of the eight or nine Indians who passed between 1863 and 1876, (which was the year when the reduction was made) of those eight or nine, not one was below nineteen. I have, unfortunately, left my notes behind me, otherwise I could have given you the exact

age of every one of those gentlemen who passed between those years, but not one was below nineteen; so that if this nineteen-years' limit had prevailed from the beginning, every one of those gentlemen who passed would have been too old, and therefore disqualified for the competition. Therefore, Sir, from the point of view of the India Office, nineteen was exactly the right limit to fix. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Of course, everybody in India understood what this change meant. It was not possible to entertain any doubts after what was said by the late Viceroy, Lord Lytton. (Hear, hear.) His Lordship expressly said in an official despatch—and I give him every credit for candour—he said that although for himself he would prefer to see the Service closed by law to the Natives of India, yet he had no doubt that the same result would be obtained by the reduction of age which had been just then sanctioned by Lord Salisbury. Now, in order to estimate the full effect of this change, you must also bear in mind that the greater number of subjects prescribed for these examinations—Latin and Greek, and the modern European languages—are not subjects which form part of the University curriculum in India, nor have we any facilities for learning those languages in our own country. It has, therefore, always been necessary for my countrymen to come over to this country at least two or ~~three~~ years before presenting themselves at these examinations, in order to undergo a special course of preparation. So that if a Native of India is to compete at the age of seventeen to nineteen, he must come to England when

he is only fourteen to sixteen years old. Now, Sir, in addition to this, if you remember how difficult it is for a young Indian at that early age to acquire a sufficient knowledge of the English language, which, I believe, is one of the most difficult languages for a foreigner to learn,—(hear, hear,)—you can readily understand why parents and guardians in India should be extremely reluctant to send their boys so far from home, friends, and parental control for the mere chance of passing an examination in which the odds are so overwhelmingly against them. One word more, and I have done. You, Sir, have alluded to the success of two of my countrymen at the last of these examinations, one of them having also had the great distinction of heading the entire list. (Cheers.) But I am afraid that the success of my young friends, so honorable to themselves, may be, perhaps, used as an argument against the considerations that I have ventured to urge before you to-day. It is, therefore, necessary that I should point out that their case is altogether exceptional. In addition to the talents and industry of which they have given so signal a proof, they have enjoyed rare advantages which are not open to the generality of their countrymen. (Hear, hear.) They are the sons of parents who have themselves resided in this country, and who have, therefore, been able to bring up their children and to educate them in England. But, Sir, the case of the ordinary Indian lad is entirely different—(hear, hear,)—and it would be a grievous wrong if these two exceptional cases were to be used as an argument in defence of the reduction of age

which has undoubtedly operated to exclude the great bulk of my countrymen. (Cheers.) Well, Sir, under these circumstances, we think it right to appeal to public opinion in this country. We appeal to your sense of justice, and we ask whether it does not concern the honour of the English 'nation to see that the declarations of Parliament and the promises of the Queen are really acted upon and honestly redeemed. (Cheers.) Public opinion in India has been thoroughly aroused against the shuffling and juggling tricks whereby Acts of Parliament have been evaded and Royal Proclamations set at naught. (Hear, hear.) If our appeal is made in vain, if nothing whatever is done to give effect to that policy of justice that has been so often proclaimed, if that policy is more honoured in the breach than in the observance, then the belief will gradually gain ground in India that England only 'holds the word of promise to our ear and breaks it in our hope,' and with that belief there will inevitably grow up the thought that justice and foreign domination are incompatible. I sincerely hope, and I am sure that every thoughtful man in India hopes, that the people of England will never suffer anything to be done in their name that will be calculated to give rise to such feelings or to excite such sentiments—(cheers)—but if feelings of that kind are once aroused, it may be extremely difficult for our leaders, thoroughly loyal as they are to the British Government, to counteract or to stem the tide of popular opinion. Sir, speaking of our popular leaders, I cannot but pause for a moment in order to pay a tribute of respect

pect to the memory of two of our great men, who have recently passed away within a few months of each other. (Hear, hear.) Each was great in his own sphere, and though neither, perhaps, was free from occasional errors, though both had experienced the fluctuations of fortune and of popular favour, their memory will be long cherished by their countrymen with affection, with respect, and with admiration. (Hear, hear.) The eloquent lips of Keshub Chunder Sen—(cheers)—are closed for ever, but the example of his life, the grandeur of his genius, and the excellence of his teachings, will survive the funeral pyre. (Cheers.) Kristo Dass Paul—(cheers)—has ceased to fight the battles of his country, whether in the columns of the *Hindu Patriot* or at the Council Board at Calcutta, but he has left behind him a noble record of services and an example of patient industry and unflagging zeal, joined to splendid abilities, which will long serve as a model and a pattern to his countrymen. (Cheers.) Well these two great men were themselves amongst the noblest products of British rule in India ; and when I take the good and the bad together, I cannot help thinking that the connection of England with India will be found in the end to have been for the benefit of both countries. (Hear, hear.) I am for drawing the two nations closer together. (Hear, hear.) I believe it would be greatly to the advantage of both the Indian people were made to feel that they were no longer treated as a hostile and conquered race, but as members of a great and free Empire—(cheers)—not less entitled, perhaps, than the Australian colonies, to take

part in a scheme of Imperial Federation, been lately talked of. (Hear, hear.)

Sir, it may even be that at some future

- **presentative of my country, more than ever inclined or taking a more hopeful view than it has been hitherto possible to do, may be tempted to try the experiment of testing the generosity of some Englishmen (cheers)—in order to find out whether they are really prepared to fraternize with us as in word. (Hear, hear.) But whether this experiment be ever tried or not, I believe that in the end the hand when the most loyal section of the Indian people will earnestly put forward a claim to some kind, and I can scarcely believe that it will be disregarded. (Cheers.) Of this, at all events, I am sure that the wisest and most far-seeing Englishmen would be the first to admit that no nation can hope permanently to maintain its sway over a large and growing population of people daily advancing in education, intelligence, and patriotism, without conceding to them a share in the government of their own country, and a voice in the management of their own affairs. (Hear, hear, and cheers.)**

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part in a scheme of Imperial Federation, such as have been lately talked of. (Hear, hear.)

Sir, it may even be that at some future time, some representative of my country, more favourably circumstanced or taking a more hopeful view of the situation than it has been hitherto possible for any of us to do, may be tempted to try the experiment of practically testing the generosity of some English constituency—(cheers)—in order to find out whether the English people are really prepared to fraternize with us in deed as well as in word. (Hear, hear.) But whether such an experiment be ever tried or not, I believe that the time is at hand when the most loyal section of the Indian people will earnestly put forward a claim to representation of some kind, and I can scarcely believe that their claim will be disregarded. (Cheers.) Of this, at least, I feel certain, that the wisest and most far-seeing English statesmen would be the first to admit that no country can ever hope permanently to maintain its sway over many millions of people daily advancing in education, in public spirit and patriotism, without conceding to them some share in the government of their own country, some voice in the management of their own affairs, and some representation in the Councils of the Empire. (Loud cheers.)

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